ELEMENTS

OF

POPULAR THEOLOGY,

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE

DOCTRINES OF THE REFORMATION,

AS AVOWED BEFORE THE

DIET AT AUGSBURG, IN MDXXX.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following work was undertaken at the request of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in the United States. The want of a volume on the plan proposed, uniting in a portable form the primary aspects of Christian Doctrine and Practice, and sustaining at the same time some relation to the Lutheran church, had long been felt and frequently expressed. Out of due respect to the glorious Reformation, the same ecclesiastical body desired, that some reference should be had to the doctrines then avowed, and the Augsburg Confession be introduced. With a view that the work might also discharge a portion of the debt, due from Protestant churches to the cause of Reformation, amid the accumulated and insidious efforts of Romanists to disseminate their errors, it was deemed expedient not to omit the list of Catholic corruptions of Christianity against which the early reformers protested before the Emperor and Diet, and which their churches had repudiated even at that early day. It was desired, that the plan of the work might be systematic, and yet that its discussions should partake rather of the popular than learned character, being designed for laymen as well as the clergy. How far the author has succeeded in

meeting the wishes of that respected judicatory of the church, his brethren generally, and the public at large, will judge.

Habitually fond of rigid adherence to system, the writer would have preferred the omission of the Augsburg Confession, as that symbol was neither designed for an epitome of Theology, nor is entirely systematic in its structure. This difficulty was however obviated by mainly pursuing a logical connexion in the arrangement of the subjects, and when any particular article of the Confession did not coincide with this order, referring the reader to its appropriate place in the work. The limits prescribed to himself, precluded as ample a survey of many topics, as would have been pleasing to the writer, and perhaps grateful to some readers. Condensed as the discussions are, they have swelled the volume beyond its contemplated size.

Throughout the whole, it was the author's prayerful effort, to render the work instructive and edifying to the intelligent Christian and theological student; and he hopes it will be found not entirely useless to ministers of the gospel. From the nature of the case, those topics could not be avoided, on which diversity of opinion exists among Christian denominations: and the writer desires those who may dissent from any of the views presented, to remember that he was conducted to their discussion by the nature of his work, and not by fondness for polemical altercation. On matters of non-fundamental importance, Christians should agree to controvert with lenity, and differ in peace. Entire harmony of opinion was not an attribute of the church even under apostolic guidance; nor have we any evidence, that diversity of view on minor points, was regarded as a barrier to ecclesiastical communion. Fundamental errorists, in-

deed, ought to be the subjects of uncompromising controversy, and of exclusion from church privileges. To this end, as well as to ascertain the fundamental soundness of applicants for sacramental and for ministerial communion, some comparison of doctrinal views is unavoidably requisite. Nor is it a matter of any moment, whether the parties present their views to each other orally; or one, or both, communicate by writing. In either case we have a creed; and, that which is written, possesses some manifest advantages over its oral counterpart. The error of creeds lies not in their being reduced to paper, but in their undue length, and rigour of construction on those minor points which ought not to be embraced in them. There is little doubt that in each of the several denominations termed orthodox, there are and always have been members living in harmony, who differ from each other as much as the symbols of the several churches. As the great Head of the church has so extensively owned the labours of all these denominations; the ground held by them in common should be considered fundamental, and the points of difference regarded in a secondary light as legitimate subjects for free and friendly inquiry. To the amicable discussion of these points even the dissentient reader therefore cannot object; but if a single page of this work be found soiled by acerbity of spirit, or harshness of language, the author will cheerfully join the reader in its condemnation.

In the composition of the following pages, the author aimed at plainness and perspicuity, as being not only the appropriate style of didactic discussions; but also best adapted to the cardinal design of his work, to convey lucid views of divine truth, in a manner intelligible also to unlearned inquirers.

To his numerous friends, who have expressed an interest in the speedy appearance of the work, the author owes a word of explanation on the cause of its delay. During the first year after he engaged in the undertaking, his impaired health enabled him to do little else than discharge his duties in the Theological Seminary, and attend to the extensive ecclesiastical business and correspondence necessarily devolving on him. During the leisure hours of the succeeding year, the greater part of the work was written: and the manuscript was sent to the printer in the latter part of December. Before the edition had entirely passed through the press, orders were received for all the copies, and a second will be commenced without delay.

In conclusion, the writer would commend this volume to the gracious blessing of that divine Being, by whose kind providence it has been completed, with the ardent prayer, that it may subserve the interests of His kingdom, and prove a blessing to many souls.

Theological Seminary, Gettysburg,
March 10, 1834.

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POPULAR THEOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.

OF NATURAL RELIGION.

BEFORE we enter on the discussion of the doctrines of the Christian religion, it is necessary that something be said concerning the channel through which those sacred truths have reached us, as well as the pretensions which they present to our view. And prior even to this investigation, the question naturally arises, do we stand in need of any religion beyond that of reason, and are we capable of sitting in judgment on the evidences of a professed revelation. A glance, therefore, at the intellectual structure of man, the extent of the religion of reason, and the evidences of revelation must, if our subsequent investigations are to be radical, be first indulged, before we enter on the discussion of the Christian doctrines.

To beings constituted as we are, no subject can be of greater importance than that of religion. We not only possess a present capacity for pleasure and pain, which may be continued in a future existence; but it is obvious that he, who so wonderfully and fearfully made us, can with the greatest facility augment this capacity and make us eternally and indescribably miserable or happy in a future world. What subject then can be compared in regard to its importance, with the relations which

we sustain to the Author of our being, the rule, if any, which he has prescribed for our conduct, and the conditions on which our endless happiness or misery is suspended?

On all these subjects we now possess extensive information, but there is a very mistaken idea prevalent as to the proportion of our knowledge which is derived from mere reason. Some very erroneously imagine that whatever such men as reject the bible, believe, may be regarded as the pure product of reason. The scriptures have shed an immense mass of light over the whole christian world, mingling with our political institutions, our social relations and even the instructions of the nursery. Hence from our earliest infancy we imbibe principles and adopt opinions, which in after life are never erased from the mind even of the veriest infidel. And as no man can possibly remember whence he derived all his ideas in every past moment of his life, whether from the bible, or from others who are indebted for them mediately or immediately to revelation, or whether they were original suggestions of his own mind; it is certain that we cannot determine by recollection what portion of our knowledge is the product of reason. It has been customary in this emergency, to resort to such heathen nations as had not the bible, for fair specimens of what unassisted reason could teach. But although such an investigation presents the powers of reason in a very humiliating light, as truth is our object we are compelled to say, that it is yet more favourable than truth admits. Some doctrines are so important to man, so intimately interwoven with all his wishes, his hopes and his fears, that if once known, they could never be entirely forgotten. We will not here say that some such were originally revealed by God to Adam, for this would be presupposing the truth of Revelation which is yet to be proved; but we may confidently assert that several such truths, particularly the existence of a God, can be traced more or less distinctly through all the recorded ages of heathen antiquity. And as there is no evidence of their having

been discovered at any particular time, the probability is that they really did reach back to the creation and were then revealed to man by God himself. This supposition is rendered still more probable, because reason did not gradually improve these doctrines, as might have been expected if she at first discovered them: but some of the ancient pagans held them in greater purity than many in modern days. Nor should it be forgotten that Plato in all probability saw the writings of Moses in Egypt, whither he had travelled in search of knowledge; that Zoroaster, whose religious system spread so extensively over the Eastern nations, was probably of Jewish extraction and was certainly acquainted with the Old Testament; and that the Jews themselves, in their various dispersions, as well as by their commercial intercourse with other nations, spread abroad a knowledge of their religion. Since therefore all nations learn some of these doctrines by tradition from their ancestors, and the best systems of heathen philosophy were also indebted more or less to revelation; it is evident that in the opinions of no nation do we see a fair specimen of reason's unaided power. Our only inquiry must be, what evidences can reason discover for the truth of these doctrines already known to her, and what can she herself discover concerning our nature and relations in the present life. And *first*

a) *As to ourselves:* When shutting out from our view every thing around us, we direct our attention to our own structure, we find that we are beings possessed of certain bodily organs, wonderfully and fearfully made. Connected with this body we find something which thinks, feels, and acts, called mind, which in all its known properties, is radically different from matter; though in its operations as totally dependent on the body, as is a musician on his instrument, for the delightful combinations of sound which he produces. Through our bodily senses, we acquire a knowledge of external objects: and we are so constructed, that we naturally and unavoidably regard the

testimony of our senses as true. No man ever practically disbelieved it, not even those infidels who in theory have professed to do so. And our different faculties are so many additional sources of ideas. We find that the truths with which we thus become acquainted, have more or less intrinsic tendency to produce conviction; and that we have the ability to investigate the relative degree of this tendency, that is, the strength of evidence. This evidence is in many cases so strong, that, if fairly and impartially weighed, we cannot resist the conviction of the truths which it tends to establish. Who could disbelieve one of the plainest demonstrations of Euclid, after having carefully examined and understood the proof on which it rests? Who could doubt the guilt of a murderer when attested by a dozen of the most credible, disinterested eyewitnesses on earth? or when seen with his own eyes? Why then it may be asked do not all men agree in the belief of Christianity, and of every other truth which some consider fully established? The reply doubtless is, that man was created a free agent, and as such has a will, a faculty, which, however men may differ in their views of its operations, all must admit to be radically different from the other faculties of the soul. If its operations were necessary and dependent in the same sense as those of perception, memory and judgment; a man would be no more to blame for resolving to steal a purse of gold, than for having *perceived* a thief in the act of stealing it, or for *remembering* that it was stolen some time ago. In the exercise of this faculty of the soul, we can avoid conviction of a truth by resolving not to examine its evidences, or by approaching the investigation with strong prejudices against the truth, or by examining only part of the evidence. And after we have examined a subject and become convinced of its truth, we can resolve to disobey that conviction, however strong it may be. Hence men may be voluntary unbelievers; and intellectual believers of Christianity, may voluntarily live in practical disobedience to its precepts. Yet the faculty for investigating truth,

which God has given us, seems to point out such investigation as our duty; and as the result of *impartial* investigation depends not upon ourselves, but on the strength of evidence which God has placed within our reach for or against any point under examination, obedience to the result of such impartial investigation must be our duty. In short, *man is a moral agent, his duty is sincere and uniform obedience to the strongest evidence*, that is, *to truth; and a better definition of virtue than this could not easily be given.*

Thus constructed, when we look around us on the universe, what can we learn?

b) *That there is a God*, we were taught in our infancy. Whether we could have discovered this doctrine if we had never learned it from others is doubtful. Since it is known to us we can see every where in the universe abundant evidences of its truth. Nay so clear are these truths that it is impossible for any good man to disbelieve them. And we very much doubt whether any wicked men in a christian country can sincerely and habitually and confidently disbelieve it. But that our ability to discern the evidences of a truth after it is known, by no means proves that we could ourselves have discovered it; is exemplified in our daily experience. Take for instance some modern discovery in physical science, some newly invented machine of real value. A man of ordinary mind, after examining it, can see and prove its excellence, and wonders that he did not long ago himself make the discovery; yet, thousands of years passed over the heads of men, before any one of them made, or rather stumbled upon it. The experiments, in the case of several men who were lost in infancy and grew up wild in the woods, as also those of the deaf and dumb, though the circumstances were adverse to the full developement of mental power, go far to corroborate our doubts as to the ability of unaided reason to deduce from the works of nature the existence of a God.

Nor, when the existence of God is known, can reason certainly establish his *unity*. The apparent elemental discord in the world, the commixture of good and evil, has led some to conjecture the existence of two conflicting superior powers. Reason may indeed look abroad in the universe and see the harmony of all its various parts. She may see the striking adaptation of the atmosphere to the lungs of man and other animals; she may perceive how admirably the influence of the sun, moon and stars is suited to the situation and necessities of man; nay, she may catch a ray of light from the most distant, visible fixed star, and prove that it is subject to the same laws of reflection and refraction, which govern the light of a candle; but all this proves only *unity of design*, evinces only agreement in the plan of the universe, and not that it was created by one superior being. Accordingly, as is well known, many among the most enlightened Pagan nations both ancient and modern, believed in either a duality or plurality of deities of various characters and orders.

c) But what can reason teach us *concerning our relations to a superior power?* That we are responsible for our actions she may indeed render probable; but as her acquaintance with the moral attributes of God is very unsatisfactory, she is unable to point out with certainty the course of conduct most pleasing to him. Though in the constitution of our physical nature, vice is often productive of pain and sickness; yet, in the course of events, how often do the wicked prosper, whilst the good man's way is proverbially rough and thorny? Why are the righteous and the wicked, subject alike to almost every variety of disease? Why are they alike swallowed up by the devastating earthquake?

That man is a sinner, is known to reason, and was acknowledged in affecting terms by many heathens.[1] But why he was

[1] Cicero, 2 Tuscul. III. 1. says, "Simulac oditi in lucem, et suscepti sumus, in omni continuo pravitate et in summa opinionum

born with sinful dispositions, and, above all, how he can be released from this malady, she knows not.

d) *Whether there is an hereafter*, that all important question, which must have so great an influence on our conduct and expectations through life, reason cannot satisfactorily answer. And admitting that there should be a future existence, she is totally unable to decide whether it will be probationary or retributive.

Such are the scanty, unsatisfactory lessons derived from reason alone. Every sincere inquirer after truth cheerfully receives them, but they should only tend to make him long for clearer light; they should only prepare him to receive with greater gratitude the ample and satisfactory instructions of the holy volume. Many of the ancient heathen expressed an ardent desire, that God would grant them farther communications of knowledge. Both Socrates and Plato confessed their need of a revelation from heaven: and so generally did the mass of the people feel the uncertainty of their knowledge, that discerning legislators, such as Solon, Lycurgus, Numa and others, knew no better method of giving sanction to their laws, than by pretending that they had received such revelation. The man therefore who knows the extreme scantiness of reason's instructions, and feels no desire for a farther revelation, is worse than a heathen. He must either be so depraved as to dread every communication from heaven, or as indifferent about his destiny as the brutes that perish!

e) But *in what manner ought God to give us farther information* on these subjects, if he saw fit to grant it to us?

Much has been said by infidels against the manner, in which God is believed by Christians to have made a revelation: but so far as we know, not one of them has been able to propose a different method, which would be half as reasonable. *Ought*

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perversitate versamur: ut pene cum lacte nutricis errorem suxisse videamur."

God to make an oral revelation to every individual of the human family in every successive generation? Would not the great mass of mankind in a few years forget many of the ideas communicated to them? And if, in order to prevent this, each one would immediately record for his own use what God had taught him, granting that all men were even able to make such a record, would we not soon have millions of bibles instead of one? And as the views which God would reveal would be substantially the same, we should have millions of repetitions of the same revelation! How absurd is this, and how much more rational the one recorded revelation which God has given, and which may be circulated over the whole world: Others have maintained that God ought in every successive age, *work new miracles* to confirm his revelation. But they forget that miracles, thus often repeated, would be miracles no more, and attract no more attention than the regular succession of summer and winter, or at most than the irregular occurrence of thunder and lightning, or descent of rain and hail. In short, if God sees fit to grant to mankind any additional information beyond what the heavens and the earth and the structure of the human soul afford, the most suitable method of its accomplishment so far as we can see, would be this: To communicate these truths which will of course be reasonable in themselves, to one or more suitable individuals; appoint them to teach these doctrines; attest the divinity of their mission by satisfactory evidence, and provide for the accurate transmission of these truths and evidences to all future generations for whom they were intended. It is obvious that oral teachers would present important advantages in addition to those of the mere written record. Yet who does not see, that although the first oral teachers alone would have sufficed to publish the gospel to their generation, because they were inspired, and therefore infallible; the oral instructions of their uninspired successors would be liable to constant error, and consequently totally unsafe in directing the momen-

tous interests of immortal souls, unless there were some infallible written record, by which they could be corrected? Such a record was happily made by the first inspired teachers of Christianity, whose instructions when orally given were confessedly infallible and of divine authority, and when written could not be less so. From these books we derive our principal information of the doctrines and some of the facts of Christianity, although at the present stage of our argument, we use them only as ordinary authentic narratives whose genuineness and integrity have often been clearly and satisfactorily established. Now, precisely in this way does Christianity profess to be a revelation from God, and throughout the long series of eighteen hundred years has she triumphantly maintained her claims in the world, whilst the tide of her evidences has been rolling on with uninterrupted and constantly increasing force and volume.

CHAPTER II.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

In looking at these evidences, they naturally fall into two classes, *original* and *progressive;* those in which the gospel came arrayed to its first hearers, and those additional items of evidence which collected around it, in its progress through the world.

I. The *original evidences.*

a) The first thing which struck the primitive hearer of the gospel, was doubtless THE CHARACTER OF THE MEN who published it to them. And who were they? Who ought they to be? Not kings of the earth, or other great men in power; lest

their new religion might be suspected of being an engine of state, and its extension be attributed to the arm of civil power: —not the rich, lest pecuniary influence should cast suspicion on it:—not the learned, lest its sacred truths might be regarded as the offspring of their own intellect by men incapable of accurate discrimination. But the persons to whom God would in all probability first make a revelation, and whom he would select to publish it, would be men previously void of much influence, yet possessed of good reputation and sound native intellect. Now precisely of this character were the first preachers of the gospel. They were not indeed "ignorant" men, as the English version of Acts 4: 13[1] erroneously asserts, but common people, not professional men—persons engaged in private life. In short they were men engaged in *mechanical* pursuits, among whom we find as much native vigor of mind, as in any other walks of life. These men their hearers knew to be as little capable of fabricating such a religion as they themselves were. Nor could they suspect their motives; for they had renounced all prospect of temporal gain to publish this gospel: nor could they doubt the miraculous facts to which they appealed; for these were attested by hundreds of other witnesses, and repeated in their own presence. How absurd then is the supposition of the prejudiced infidel Volney, that these men were a "combination of artful impostors," who built upon the credulity of mankind, the stupendous fabric of the Christian Church! When, therefore, the apostles declared, that they had not invented their doctrines themselves, their fellow citizens readily did and necessarily must believe them. When they declared, that they were taught by the Lord Jesus, what would be the impression? The populace knew, that the apostles had intercourse with Jesus; but what proof had they that he was not himself an impostor? That they could not regard him in this light, is evident from the ma-

[1] *ἀγραμματοί καὶ ἰδιῶται.* See Rosenmueller's Scholia.

nifest sincerity apparent in his whole life, but especially from the fact, that he neither sought nor accepted any advantage or honour from his fellowmen, which he could so easily have obtained by accommodating himself to the Jewish ideas of the Messiah as a temporal prince. On the contrary he knew and himself predicted, that privation, persecution and death would be his reward. Such never had prior to that time, and never since has been the conduct of designing deceivers. Impostors had arisen before and have been known since; but their conduct invariably betrayed them. Mohammed pretended to be a messenger from God, but the licentiousness of the religion which he taught, the sword by which he promulgated it, and the naked views of self-aggrandizement which his conduct betrayed, proved his imposture. But in Jesus is seen nothing that could reflect suspicion on his character. He came indeed to publish a religion, but they knew it was a religion of self-denial; it commanded men to bridle their passions, to cultivate the nobler powers of the soul, to love and practice virtue. He came also to establish a kingdom, but he told them it was a "kingdom not of this world." He paved for himself the way to a throne—but it was a throne in heaven. To establish his kingdom he drew the sword—but it was "the sword of the Spirit." His loins were girt, but with truth; he wore a breastplate, but of righteousness, and a shield, but it was a shield of faith; for his was a religion of peace and good will to men, and forbade

> "To wade through slaughter to a throne,
> And shut the gates of mercy on mankind."

Nor had the Jews any ground for considering Jesus as an *enthusiast*. The moderation uniformly evinced by him in the execution of all his designs, and especially the vast comprehensiveness of his plan for a spiritual kingdom, which according to his own declarations was to be executed almost entirely after his death, forbids the idea.

b) The character of the first teachers of Christianity was, therefore, in itself calculated to arrest the attention of the primitive hearer and prepossess him in favor of their communications. But this interest was soon heightened, and this confidence increased by THE NATURE OF THE DOCTRINES WHICH THEY TAUGHT. The truths of the sacred volume relate either to doctrines to be believed, or changes of heart to be experienced, or to duties of life to be performed, and may therefore accurately be divided into *doctrinal*, *experimental* and *practical*. In all these departments of truth the primitive hearer was arrested, as he would naturally expect, by many things new, interesting and of eternal importance, and some things especially relating to God, which seemed to border on mystery. But as the truths concerning the divine being, which he had known and believed before, were of the same kind; as he could no more comprehend the mode of the divine omnipresence, the fact of which he had long believed, than the mode of the incarnation of the Son of God, and the trinity, which these new teachers inculcated, he considered this contiguous mystery as no objection.[1] Each class of these truths, moreover, contained numerous positive evidences of divine origin. *The doctrines* which they taught, corrected the errors of both Jews and Gentiles, and supplied the deficiences of their religious systems. Instead of a God whose name was legion, being indeed many, the Christian religion taught the polytheistic heathen the existence of one living and true God—instead of idols of wood and stone, which their own hands had manufactured, it presented to them God as a spirit, pervading immensity with his presence, and beholding with omniscient eye the thoughts, words and deeds of all his creatures. Instead of the external homage through types and ceremonies at Jerusalem, it taught the Jew and Samaritan that the service of Je-

[1] For the full discussion of the relation of the trinity to reason, the consideration of which would in this place have interrupted the argument, the reader is referred to the article of the trinity.

hovah is not confined either to mount Gerizim or Jerusalem, but that God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and may every where be found. Instead of the darkness and uncertainty which hung around the future destiny of man, it brought life and immortality to clearest light: it elevated the veil which separated between time and eternity, and spread before them in all their length and breadth, the future mansion of the blessed, as well as the doleful prison-house of the accursed. Above all it taught to every serious inquirer with a degree of clearness not to be misunderstood, and with an amplitude leaving nothing to be desired, a satisfactory answer to the momentous, the thrilling question, "what must I do to be saved?" The serious gentile found these doctrines so strongly commend themselves to his mind, and the reflecting Jew found them moreover so coincident with the doctrines of Moses and the prophets; that they felt the nature of this new religion combine with the character of its publishers, to arrest their attention and command their assent.

Nor could the *changes of heart* which Christianity required, appear unreasonable to the serious mind. That mankind were depraved creatures, prone to do and delight in that which they knew to be wrong, even the heathen had acknowledged. Now Christianity required, that this depraved heart should be so changed by the power of God, as to take delight in those holy occupations, which are best calculated to promote our happiness on earth, and must constitute the source of our felicity in heaven: that we should be transformed into the image of God, and like him love holiness, delight in the prosperity of our fellow-beings, forgive our enemies and place our supreme affections on things above. That such a change must be conducive to happiness, that it was in every respect reasonable, the primitive hearer must have perceived; nor could the tender of its production, by the spirit of God, in all who would attend and obey the instructions of the apostles, be objectionable in his view.

The *ethical system* of Christianity in like manner must have made a favourable impression on the primitive hearer. The Jew found it elevating the standard of virtue far above the requisitions of Moses and the prophets,[1] and saw his duty set forth in a light that could not fail to flash conviction into every serious, inquiring mind. The gentile found many of his imagined virtues blotted out from the catalogue, such as love of fame, self confidence, stoical apathy under suffering, hatred of enemies and suicide; and beheld their place supplied by milder, more humble and benevolent dispositions. The Christian religion inculcated love to enemies; taught its votary to bless those that cursed him, to do good to those that hate him, and pray for them who despitefully used him;[2] to love and do good to all mankind. It taught a path of duty adapted to the constitution of man, harmonizing fully with all his relations in life, requiring him to give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to discharge to God the duties which he owed to the great author of his being. The primitive hearer, therefore, found the truths proposed by the Saviour and his apostles, in themselves so new as to arrest their attention, so important as to excite their hopes and fears, so reasonable and plausible as to invite their belief. But these communications were accompanied by other circumstances, calculated still more to excite an interest in their bosoms and completely to command their belief.

c) Those who first preached these doctrines, declared, that *God, who sent them, authenticated their mission by performing diverse miracles;* and the primitive hearer actually witnessed such works with his own eyes. The miracles of the Saviour himself, who professed to be the Son of God, were not only first in order, but also most numerous, stupendous and important. But were they of such a nature, and performed under such

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[1] Matth. 5: 17. 21—22. 27. 28. 31. 32. 33. 34. &c.

[2] Matth. 5: 43.

circumstances, as to be clear of all suspicion? How could the sincere inquirer doubt when even his enemies confessed, This man doth many miracles; when he knew that they *were of the most various nature.* He healed all kinds of sickness.[1] He miraculously changed water into wine.[2] He provided for Peter the piece of tribute money in the fish's mouth:[3] and procured for him a miraculous draught of fishes.[4] He walked upon the sea.[5] He commanded the wind and waves and they obeyed.[6] He miraculously fed at one time above four thousand, and at another five thousand persons, beside women and children.[7] He displayed divine foreknowledge.[8] He raised the dead[9] on several occasions, and finally he himself arose from the dead.[10] It was also notorious, that these exhibitions of miraculous power, were *not confined to one place*, where Jesus might have enjoyed facilities for deception. Of some the theatre was Jerusalem, others were performed in the temple, others in Galilee, others in different towns and villages, and some the Saviour healed, whom he even did not see! Nor were his friends the only spectators of his miracles. Enemies of learning, ingenuity and virulence were often present; especially Judas, who had every possible opportunity to detect the supposed fraud, as well as every inducement to divulge it. And could any reflecting Jew for a moment indulge the supposition, that if the traitor had entertained the least suspicion, that Jesus was an impostor, he would have felt any compunction at having brought him to merited punishment; much less have brought back the money, *acknowledged* that he had betrayed *innocent* blood, and gone and hanged himself?

Nor could it have appeared possible, by any ingenuity whatever, to effect an imposition on his disciples and his enemies, with regard to the principal and most striking of all his miracles,

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[1] Matth. 4: 23. 24. [2] John 2: 1—11. [3] Matth. 17: 27.
[4] Luke 5: 4—7. [5] Matth. 14: 25. [6] Mark 4: 35—39.
[7] Matth. 14: 21. [8] John 1: 49. 50. [9] John 11: 1—47.
[10] John 20. Luke 24: 1—40.

his own resurrection from the dead. For, that he was truly dead was confessed by his most inveterate foes. When Joseph of Arimathea desired of Pilate the body of Jesus, Pilate would not grant his request, until, having inquired of the centurion, he found that Jesus had been dead some time. And the soldiers, who had been sent to break the legs of all three, brake the legs of the two malefactors, but coming to Jesus (we are told) "they brake not his legs, because he was dead already." And now when the Saviour had been committed to the tomb, what could any prudent inquirer, what could an enemy of the gospel wish, to make the evidence absolutely conclusive? Why that some cautious, discerning person, or better still some such enemy of Christ, could be there, and watch the grave during the eventful three days. Now all this, the first hearers of the apostles well knew, had actually been done.[1] "The chief priests and pharisees came to Pilate saying, sir, we remember the deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, he is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." How natural these suspicions! How exactly like what many at the present day would feel! We may then rest assured, these were the very persons who would not suffer an imposture to be practiced so much to their injury by which they would stand condemned as murderers of innocent blood. "Then said Pilate unto them, ye have a watch, go your way, make the grave *as sure as ye can*. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, *sealing the stone*, and *setting a watch*." That the Saviour, however, notwithstanding all this precaution, actually arose from the dead, was a matter of absolute certainty to those whom the apostles first addressed; for he had frequently appeared to different persons, at one time to more than five hun-

[1] Matth. 27: 62—66.

dred brethren, and during forty days after his resurrection he instructed his apostles in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,[1] after which as he was conversing with his disciples at Bethany, "whilst they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight."[2] Hundreds were yet living, who had been eyewitnesses of these stupendous miracles, and in any ordinary collection of hearers in or near Jerusalem, one or more of these persons would usually be embraced.

d) It was moreover known, that this Jesus had himself commissioned his apostles, Judas excepted, to publish his doctrines to all nations; hence their divine authority could not be disputed, and they were authorized to teach. And Jesus told them that the Holy Ghost, whose special influences should be poured out on them at pentecost, would bring to their recollection, and further teach them all things necessary for their official duties. There could be no doubt therefore of the infallible accuracy of their instructions. The hearers of the apostles, moreover, knew, that Jesus had conferred on them the power of *working miracles* in his name; for they indisputably exercised it. When Peter healed the lame man,[3] even the Jewish sanhedrim was compelled to exclaim, "For that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought by them, is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it."[4] No, we cannot deny it, we who have heretofore possessed the confidence of the people, we whose interest so strongly demands it, we whose honour and power depend on it; we cannot deny it. And why? Because the lame man was for many years known to thousands, who all now see him restored. We cannot deny it, because we and hundreds beside us, know it with as much certainty, as we do the existence of Jerusalem, the city in which we dwell; for we see it with our own eyes!

e) The reflecting Jew would moreover remember, that a-

[1] 1 Cor. 15: 5—8. [2] Acts 1: 9. [3] Acts 3: 5—7.
[4] Acts 4: 16.

bout that time the expectation of the coming of Messiah prevailed in Israel. And if he knew the predictions which had been given to his people, or if he inquired of Moses and the prophets, how surprizingly clear and striking would he find their applicability to Jesus! Had it been indefinitely predicted, that at some future time, a distinguished personage should arise and establish an extensive empire, it might have been Cyrus or Philip of Macedon, or Alexander the Great, or Cæsar, as well as Christ. Or, had the prophecies only determined, that this personage should arise from among the Jews; it might have been fulfilled in Judas Maccabeus, or Jonathan, or John Hircanus or Aristobulus, as well as by Jesus of Nazareth. But when he finds the prophets determining the very time of his appearance, namely before the sceptre or civil power should depart from the Jews; whilst the sacred temple was yet standing; and at the expiration of the seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel, which ended in the year of his death; when he heard them specify the very tribe (that of Judah) from which he should descend—yea, the very family of David in that tribe—and the very town, Bethlehem, in which he should be born; and, as there were two towns of that name, adding that it was Bethlehem in Judea and not in Galilee;—when on investigation, the sincere, and inquiring Jew found these, and many other particulars, distinctly predicted by one or other of the prophets, and knew that all these things were so perfectly fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; how was it possible for him to doubt? Who that could weigh the force of evidence, and was anxious to learn the truth, would not have been convinced? Who that was not blinded by prejudice, or enslaved to lust, would not, under such circumstances, have been constrained to exclaim, Lord, it is enough, I believe that thou art the Christ, the son of the living God, to whom else shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life!

f) Such were the primitive evidences which Christianity presented to those to whom it was first preached. And if they

attended to its doctrines and endeavored to obey its prescriptions, they soon *experienced within their souls* another, a still more impressive and convincing evidence of its divine origin. They found these sacred truths penetrating the inmost recesses of their hearts, shedding abroad their benign light, enlisting their feelings in the cause of God, and urging them to return to the love and obedience of their forsaken heavenly Father, and find happiness in the paths of his commandments. In short they found, as every inquiring sinner will now find by happy experience, the truth of the Saviour's declaration, If any man will do my will, he shall know of my doctrine whether it be of God.[1]

II. And what is the light in which Christianity presents itself to *succeeding generations, to us at the present day?* Has any certain record of its doctrines and duties and facts reached us? Can its primitive evidences exert any influence on our minds, and has the stream of evidence, as it rolled on through successive centuries, been scattered and lost, or has it accumulated greater volume and force?

That *we have as certain knowledge* on the subject of Christianity, as the primitive hearers of the apostles, is indisputable, since in the kind Providence of our God, the very men whom Christ himself appointed as oral teachers of his religion, also reduced their instructions to writing for the benefit of distant Christians and of after ages.[2] Those instructions are found in the books of the New Testament, which we have hitherto, in the progress of our argument, received only as ordinary, authentic narratives of the facts recorded in them. But since it is certain, that the written instructions of all men, are at least as accurate if not more so than their oral, extemporaneous communications; it follows, that the written productions of the apostles

[1] John 7: 17.

[2] John 20: 31. But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that ye might have life through his name. Luke 1: 1—4.

of Jesus must be as correct and authentic as their preaching. And it is evident from what has been said, that they were divinely authorized teachers of Christianity, and that the instructions which they gave were rendered infallible by the guidance of the Spirit. Hence, as it would be absurd to suppose, that those who were infallible when they spoke, would instantly cease to be so when they undertook to communicate the same truths to distant Christians or future generations by writing; it inevitably follows, that the writings of the apostles have the same kind and same degree of divine authority and inspiration, which belonged to their oral communications. The call of the apostle Paul was miraculous, but his divine mission and inspiration are established by evidence of the same kind and degree which sustains the others. The writings of Luke and Mark receive a similar character from the fact, that those of the former were written in the company of Paul and sanctioned[1] by him, and those of the latter dictated by Peter.[2] And here it may in passing be remarked, that the divine authority of the books of the Old Testament, is also proved by the circumstance of their being so frequently quoted as such, by the infallible Saviour and his inspired apostles.

From the above argument we derive the important inference, *that having the genuine, unadulterated written instructions of those very persons, who by divine authority first taught the Christian religion, that religion now comes to us arrayed in the full force of all its primitive or original evidences.*

But the stream of evidence has received *new accessions* in the course of its progress, and the believer of after ages can find his faith confirmed by additional facts, not accessible to the primitive hearers of the apostles.

Among these *progressive* or *cumulative* evidences (which we

[1] Acts 21 : 17. 24 : 27. &c. see Storr's Biblical Theology, Vol. I. p. 137.

[2] See Storr's Bib. Theol. Vol. I. p. 136.

can take time merely to enumerate, but not discuss,) we may specify,

a) The *astonishing harmony of the books of the Old and New Testaments*, written in different countries, by different persons, and hundreds of years apart; yet all constituting one connected, progressive revelation. This unexampled coincidence of persons many of whom never even saw each other, in forming one harmonious work, and in communicating such successive and connected degrees of revealed truth, is explicable on no other supposition than that it was the same Spirit who guided the pen from Genesis to Revelation.

b) The *fulfilment of prophecy in the destruction of Jerusalem* is another progressive evidence. A few years only elapsed after the departure of our Lord, until his disciples witnessed with their own eyes another fearful evidence of the divine origin of their religion. The Saviour had predicted in clear and unequivocal terms, the sad catastrophe, which awaited the devoted city of *Jerusalem*. He informed the Jews that "there should be great distress in the land and wrath upon the people;" "that they should fall by the edge of the sword;" "that there should not one stone of the magnificent temple be left on another;" and that there should be great tribulation in the city such as was not since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be, and that many of those who heard him should live to see it.[1] How fearfully all this was accomplished in A. D. 70, when the city was taken and reduced to a heap of ruins by the Roman general Titus, is well known.

c) The *dispersion of the Jews* was also clearly foretold. "They shall be led away captive into all nations," said the Saviour, and who has not been impressed with the singular spectacle presented by the descendants of this devoted people until the present day? For seventeen centuries have they literally been scattered among all nations, never amalgamating with them, yet

[1] Matthew 24, and Mark 13.

never succeeding in the formation of a people or government of their own!

d) Since "Shilo, the Messiah, has come"[1] "the sceptre has actually and finally departed from Judah." More than seventeen hundred years before the Saviour actually appeared, the Patriarch Jacob having "gathered his sons together that he might tell them what should befall them in the last days," told them that the Messiah, or Shilo, should appear before the civil power or sceptre had finally departed from the Jews, implying that after the advent of the Messiah, that power should not long be retained by them. Now we cannot fail to see a strong confirmation of our faith and cumulative evidence of the divinity of the bible in the fact, that although the civil power was never finally wrested from the Jews during all the vicissitudes which they had experienced as a nation before the birth of Christ, it was soon after actually taken from them and never has been restored till this day!

e) The Messiah or "desire of nations" was also to come, whilst the second temple[2] was yet standing; implying that after his advent, it would be destroyed; and its entire demolition was clearly predicted by the Saviour himself.[3] Now in A. D. 70, about forty years after the Saviour's appearance, the temple actually was destroyed and has never since been rebuilt! We have therefore in the destruction of the temple another progressive evidence, which the first Christians had not, that Jesus was the Messiah, was sent from God, and therefore his instructions divine.

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[1] Gen. 49: 10.

[2] Haggai 2: 7—9. See also Malachi 3: 1.

[3] Matth. 24: 1, 2. And Jesus went out and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, see ye not all these things? verily I say unto you *there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

f) The Revelation of St. John, contains a prophetic history of the Christian church, and is a standing miracle for all ages. It was not designed, that all its portions should be intelligible prior to their completion. Hence this book of prophecy always has been enveloped in some mystery. But the progress of completion in every successive century, has reflected increasing light on this interesting portion of sacred writ, and in the last three centuries, the vicissitudes of the Papal "beast," the glorious Reformation, and the more recent efforts to spread the gospel of Christ over every nation of the earth, have placed in strong relief the prominent features of that prophetic exhibition of futurity, and tended greatly to confirm the believer's hope.[1]

g) Another progressive evidence of the divine origin of Christianity we behold in its extension and preservation under the circumstances of the case. The nature of this religion is such, that it presented no inducements to its adoption to any other than those who sincerely believed its doctrines and promises. Present difficulties, persecution and often death, were the reward of its profession. Nothing but the belief of a rest remaining for the people of God hereafter, could enable men to believe that godliness is profitable unto all things; nothing but the belief that God was with them, and that he required such sacrifices, could have fortified the breasts of the primitive martyrs amid the horrors of the rack and stake. Moreover, no other religion was ever propagated by mere instruction. The different forms of paganism had been transmitted by tradition from the earliest ages, and were so incorporated with the civil governments as to be mere machines of state. They were therefore supported by the governments for political purposes, and not, like Christianity, extended by the intrinsic force of their own truths. Hence arose the oppositions of those who

[1] On this interesting subject the reader is referred to "Faber on the Prophecies," and the "Prophetic History of the Christian Religion," by the Rev. J. G. Schmucker, D. D.

derived their subsistence from the services of the established system, hence the cruel, the inhuman persecutions which raged with almost uninterrupted fury for several centuries, and in which frequently all the energies, pecuniary, military, and intellectual were exerted to exterminate Christianity from the earth. Yet amid all these difficulties the religion of the despised Nazarene, by the sword of the Spirit and the aid of its divine Author, fought its way against the pride of power, the pomp of opulence, and the sensuality of lust; until in the short space of a few centuries, the vast and powerful empire of the Romans, bowed her neck to the crucified Galilean, and the banners of Christianity, which were first unfurled in the valleys of Judea, waved triumphant over the palace of the Cæsars! Was any other religion *thus* extended? Could any other be, especially such a religion as the Saviour taught?

h) The salutary influence which Christianity has exerted on those nations which have embraced it in any tolerable degree of purity, presents another item of progressive evidence. An influence so salutary could proceed from no other than a good source; an influence so far transcending all that men ever exerted by their own ability, proves that another power beyond that of man was concerned in its propagation. It inculcates those principles, by which alone the faithful administration of civil governments can be in the highest degree secured. It has mitigated the horrors of war; abolished human sacrifices; it has elevated the female sex to their proper station in society; it has almost throughout the whole extent of its influence abolished domestic slavery; it has improved the situation of the poorer classes of society, and given rise to various enterprizes of benevolence, almost as numerous as the forms of misery and want met with on earth. And if the influence of this religion were more generally felt in nations nominally Christian, and its precepts faithfully obeyed; it would still farther mitigate every

form of suffering, and banish from the face of the earth that prolific mother of evils, war.

i) The peculiar structure of Christianity by which it accomplishes the benign effects above enumerated, and which adapt it to universal adoption under every form of civil government, and every state of social society, demonstrate that it is based on a more perfect view of all the complicated relations of human society and all the principles of human nature than ever fell to the lot of any uninspired teacher of religion.

Similar evidences are found in j) the mythologies of the Asiatic nations, which confirm many of the prominent facts of the Old Testament: k) in the discoveries of modern geologists, who find in the bowels of the earth conclusive proof of a universal deluge, of antediluvian animals, &c. &c.

In view of this overwhelming mass of concurrent evidence, to which might be added the corroborative testimony of profane writers, of coins, of geology, &c., it is impossible for the impartial and persevering inquirer to doubt the divinity of the Christian religion. To suppose all these evidences to have originated in chance, is to admit a far greater miracle than any contended for by the Christian, and to believe it performed without any design, performed too without any beneficial effect, yea performed in circumstances calculated inevitably to involve the human family in a stupendous system of unqualified error! The different objections against Christianity are either mere misapprehensions of the objector, or they can be, as they often have been, satisfactorily answered. How truly may it, then, be said of the Christian, "on argument his faith is built." How just the declaration,

> A Christian dwells, like Uriel, in the sun,
> Meridian evidence puts doubt to flight;
> And ardent hope anticipates the skies.

CHAPTER III.

THE CANONICAL BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE, AND PRINCIPAL VERSIONS.

The books which participate in the mass of evidence above discussed are the following, viz. The five books of Moses, termed Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus Numbers, and Deuteronomy; Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Solomon's Song, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, which constitute the Hebrew canon or the Old Testament. The books of the New Testament are I. Historical, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Acts of the Apostles, also by Luke; II. Doctrinal, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, his 1 and 2 to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and to the Hebrews; the Epistle of James, the 1 and 2 of Peter, 1, 2 and 3 of John, and of that of Jude; and III. Prophetical, the Revelation of St. John.

The books termed Apocrypha, neither lay claim to divine origin, nor are entitled to be regarded as inspired. For they contradict themselves; contradict the Scriptures; were not acknowledged by the Jews; were not written until after the spirit of prophecy had ceased with Malachi; are never quoted by

Christ or his apostles; and were not received by the early Christians in the apostolic and subsequent age.

As the canonical scriptures have been proved a divine revelation, it inevitably follows that we are bound to receive them as such, and to believe all the declarations which they contain.

a) Some of these declarations represent this revelation *as a rule of faith and practice.*[1]

b) Other passages declare it to be a sufficient rule :[2] not one which will put an end to all controversy or produce absolute uniformity of views among men, but a rule sufficiently clear for the sincere inquirer.

c) Others declare it to be the only infallible rule.[3]

d) Others record the appointment of an order of men as teachers of this religion ;[4] but 1) bind them to study the Scriptures[5] and teach according to them :[6] 2) mention certain teach-

[1] 2 Tim. 3: 16. 17. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ;* that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto *all good works.* John 5: 39. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have *eternal life*, and they are they which testify of me. Matth. 22: 29. Jesus answered and said unto them, ye do err, not knowing the *scriptures.*

[2] 2 Tim. 3: 15. And from *a child* thou hast known the holy scriptures, which *are* ABLE *to make thee wise unto salvation*, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

[3] Isaiah 8: 20. To the law and the testimony : if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them. 2 Pet. 1: 19. We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth into a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts.

[4] 2 Tim. 2: 2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Matth. 28: 18—20.

[5] 1 Tim. 4: 15. Meditate upon these things (the things among others taught in that epistle) ; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.

[6] Gal. 1: 8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach (announce) *any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached,* (published, *orally* and *in this epistle*) *let him be accursed.*

ers, whose doctrines were false;[1] and 3) Require the hearers to compare the instructions of their teachers with the written revelation of God;[2] and 4) Pronounce the most awful curses on those who either add to, or subtract from the things taught in the inspired volume.[3]

From all these considerations we perceive the absurdity, as well as the wickedness of the Roman Catholic church, which maintains, that the scriptures do not teach all the necessary features of true Christianity, that God's own word is not sufficiently clear to serve as a rule of faith and practice to Christians generally; and that her popes and councils and priests are indispensable and infallible interpreters of what the scriptures mean!!

The principal modern versions most extensively used are the German translation of Luther, and the English published in the reign of king James I. of England, about two hundred years ago. In preparing his version the illustrious reformer received much assistance from the learned Melancthon. Further to ensure its accuracy Luther invited a select party to meet at his house

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[1] 2 Pet. 2: 1. 2. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as *there will be false teachers among you*, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom, the way of truth will be evil spoken of.

[2] 2 John 10: 11. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine (that taught in this epistle) receive him not unto your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds. Acts 17: 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so.*

[3] Rev. 22: 18. 19. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away of the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book!

daily, and aid in the revision of his work. Melancthon collated the Greek, Cruciger the Chaldee, and other professors the Rabinical writings. Justus Jonas, John Buganhagen, and Aurogallus also lent their aid. The work was published in detached parts; but the New Testament was finished in 1522, and the entire bible was first published in 1530. The language of Luther's version is remarkably pure and elegant, has justly been ranked with the German classics, and is at the present day entirely intelligible to the popular reader. The English version is the joint production of forty seven distinguished divines, who completed their work in 1613. It is a very correct and able version; but too rigidly literal to be entirely perspicuous.

The sacred volume has been translated into many other languages, ancient and modern; and by the pious efforts of different bible societies of the present day alone, into more than one hundred and fifty languages and dialects.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CORRUPTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND REPUBLICATION OF ITS DOCTRINES BY THE EARLY REFORMERS.

THE religion inculcated in that volume, the evidences of whose divinity we have been reviewing, was taught with various purity in the different ages which have elapsed since its publication. In the first few centuries, the church retained much of her apostolic beauty and purity, until her unhallowed union with the civil governments was effected by the Emperor Con-

stantine and his successors, and the papal hierarchy was gradually formed; when one corruption succeeded another, until the lustre of the church was almost entirely buried in the midnight gloom of the dark ages. In due time however, the great Head of the church commanded light to shine out of the darkness. Wickliffe, in the fourteenth century, and Huss and Jerome of Prague, in the earlier part of the fifteenth, began to expose the abominable corruptions of the Roman Catholic church, and paid the forfeit of their lives for their zeal in the cause of their Redeemer. But in the sixteenth century, the great Head of the church raised up Martin Luther and his immortal coadjutors, who shook the papal throne to its very foundation; and, guided by the hand of Heaven, effected the glorious Reformation. This regeneration of the church has since been extended over the major part of Europe, and to it are we also indebted for the liberty, civil and religious, which distinguish this favoured land. In the progress of their work, and under circumstances peculiarly interesting and imposing, the Reformers were called on to declare their fundamental views of the Christian religion, and thus framed the mother symbol of the Reformation.

The Augsburg Confession was prepared for the twofold purpose of rebutting the slanders of the papists, and of publishing to Europe, the doctrines of the Reformers. The Emperor Charles V., in order to terminate the disputes between the Pope and the princes who favoured the reformation, which tended to distract his empire by civil discord, and threw a formidable barrier into the way of his ambitious projects, had ordered the convention of a diet, at Augsburg, and promised his personal attendance. The Pope also, who had long been pressing on the Emperor the adoption of violent measures to suppress the obstinate heretics, as the holy father termed them, cherished the flattering expectation that this diet would give a death blow to the Protestant cause. Encouraged by the promise of impartial audience from the Emperor, the Elector of

Saxony charged Luther, Melancthon, Bugenhagen, and Jonas to make a sketch of their doctrines to be used at the diet. Such a summary was written by Luther in seventeen sections, termed the Torgan Articles. The Emperor, however, instead of reaching Augsburg on the 8th of April according to promise, did not arrive until the 15th of June. Melancthon in the mean time expanded these Torgan Articles, into what is now denominated the Augsburg Confession. This enlarged work was then submitted to Luther at Coburg, and received his cordial sanction.

On the 25th of June, therefore, at 3 o'clock, P. M. this memorable Confession was publicly pronounced in the presence of the Emperor, his brother king Ferdinand, the electors John of Saxony, with his son John Frederick, George of Brandenburg, Francis and Ernest, dukes of Luneburg and Brunswick, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, Wolfgang, prince of Anhalt, and about two hundred other princes and divines. The Chancellors of the Elector, Baier and Pontanus arose, the former holding in his hand the German copy and the latter the Latin original. The Emperor desired the Latin to be read ; but the Elector remonstrated, alleging, that as the diet was assembled on German ground, it ought to use the German language. The Emperor having assented, Dr. Baier read the German copy, and, it is said, pronounced it with such an emphasis and so powerful a voice, that every syllable was heard not only by all in the hall, but also by the vast multitudes who had crowded around the doors and windows of the spacious edifice.

This Confession, although it did not change the predetermined purpose of the politic Charles, exerted a prodigious influence in favour of the reformers in the minds of the numerous princes, divines and literary men, who had assembled from a distance on this memorable occasion. It was soon after disseminated throughout Europe, and has been translated into the Hebrew, Greek, Spanish, Belgic, Italian, Slavonic, French and

English languages. The version found in this work, was made by the writer from the original Latin. This remark may not be superfluous, as most of the English versions which he has seen were made from the German copy; which, though entirely coincident in sense, differs occasionally in its phraseology. In one or two instances an amplifying sentence, contained in the Latin, was omitted by the Confessors in the German; and as the writer is no friend of *extended* creeds, it was deemed unnecessary to retain them.

This confession, which is justly styled the mother symbol of the Reformation, has been adopted by the major part of all Protestant Europe, and has for about three centuries past been the standing symbol of Lutherism in the following kingdoms:

GERMANY, including PRUSSIA, part of HUNGARY, small part of FRANCE	17,000,000.
DENMARK, in which the king must profess the Augsburg Confession	1,000,000.
NORWAY, including ICELAND,	746,000.
SWEDEN,	2,800,000.

LAPLAND and FINLAND also contain numerous churches of the Augsburg Confession.

The United Brethren or Moravians, though peculiar in their church government, have always retained the Augsburg Confession as their symbol, and yet adhere to it more strictly than most other portions of the Lutheran church.

The whole number of Christians in Europe who profess the Augsburg Confession has been rated by good authors at 27,000,000, but certainly is upward of 20,000,000, and embraces in it seventeen reigning sovereigns.

The Lutheran church in Europe is therefore more numerous than all the other protestant denominations in continental Europe together, and the Augsburg Confession is professed by

more than twice as many souls as any other Protestant Confession of faith. The Lutheran Church in the United States, which contains 1050 churches and about 48,000 regular communing members, has indeed always regarded the Augsburg Confession as the authorized summary of her doctrines, but has not required any oath of obligation to all its contents. The General Synod of the Lutheran Church has adopted only the 21 doctrinal articles, omitting even the condemnatory clauses of these, and also the entire catalogue of Abuses corrected. No minister, however, considers himself bound to believe every sentiment contained in these twenty-one articles; but only the fundamental doctrines. Accordingly, the pledge of adoption required at licensure and ordination, is couched in the following terms: 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to be the word of God, and the *only infallible* rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you believe, that the *fundamental* doctrines of the word of God, are taught in a manner *substantially* correct, in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession?

The Lutheran divines of this country are not willing to bind either themselves or others, to anything more than the fundamental doctrines of the Christian revelation, believing that an immense mass of evil has resulted to the church of God, from the rigid requisition of extensive and detailed creeds. The Saviour and his apostles have left no other creed than that contained in the Scriptures, and although experience and the nature of the case require some mutual agreement as to the doctrines to be inculcated by the ministry in any portion of the church of Christ, lest one should demolish what the other is labouring to build up; yet we can see no sufficient warrant for any Christian church to require as a term of admission or communion, greater conformity of view than is requisite to harmony of feeling and successful cooperation, in extending the kingdom of Christ.

What unshackled friend of truth can doubt, that the introduc-

tion of so many minor ramifications of doctrine into Modern Confessions of faith, and the requisition of them all as terms of ecclesiastical admission and communion, destroyed the natural estimate which every unbiassed mind would form of the relative importance of each? Who can doubt, that men were thus led to regard and denounce as heretics the members of other communions, who held as cordially as they themselves did, all the essentials of the Christian system; and in the eyes of the great Head of the church, were perhaps more acceptable than their self-erected judges? In short it cannot be denied, that the enormous amplitude of the principal Protestant Symbols and the unqualified assent to them which was for a long time required, were and ever would be a bone of endless contention, and the prolific mother of bigotry and sectarianism. Had the early protestants endeavoured to select the principal and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, required a belief of them from all applicants for admission into their ranks, and agreed among themselves that discrepance of views on matters of non-fundamental nature, should neither be a bar to ecclesiastical communion nor fraternal affection; they would have saved the church from the curse of those dissensions, by which piety was in a great degree destroyed, and on several occasions, the very foundations of Protestantism shaken. What can be more painful to the true Christian, than to witness those who love the Lord Jesus, wasting that strength in mutual crimination for departure from some jot or tittle of a creed, not involving the ground scheme of gospel truth, nor clearly determined in Scripture, which ought to be directed against the enemies of the cross, which ought to be expended in bringing sinners to Christ?

But although Lutheran divines are strenuous advocates for liberty of thought, and free, untrammeled investigation of God's word; there is really as much doctrinal agreement and more harmony of feeling among them, than is found in any other church in America. Indeed, we do not hesitate to record it as our de-

liberate opinion, that full latitude of investigation within the bounds of fundamentals, is better calculated to beget unity of faith than extensive symbolic restrictions. How can that man be an impartial inquirer after truth; how can he throw open his soul to the full influence of evidence, who knows that exclusion from his ecclesiastical connexions, ejection from his pastoral charge, and the exposure of his dependent family to poverty and want would be the consequence if his investigations should result in the rejection of a single article in his confession of faith?

After these observations, it is almost superfluous to remark, that although this work, explanatory of the doctrines of the Lutheran church, was undertaken by request of the General Synod of said church, and contains the principal views which we believe are entertained by the great mass of our divines; it is not designed to be in any sense a standard to regulate the opinions of others, any farther than the evidences which it contains may tend to generate deliberate conviction.

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

ARTICLE I.

OF GOD.

Our churches with one accord teach, that the decree of the Council of Nice, concerning the unity of the divine essence, and concerning the three persons, is true and ought to be confidently believed, viz. that there is one divine essence, which is called and is God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator and preserver of all things visible and invisible: and yet that there are three persons, who are of the same essence and power, and are coeternal, The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And the term person they use in the same sense, in which it is employed by ecclesiastical writers on this subject, to signify not a part or quality of something else, but that which exists of itself.

I. *The Existence of God.*

The bible never enters into a formal proof of the existence of the divine being, but always presupposes its belief in the reader, and sometimes illustrates it by reference to the works of nature.[1] All nations possess a traditionary knowledge of this doctrine; and so strong and decided does the apostle Paul consider the aptitude and tendency of the human mind to embrace it and discern the evidences of its truth, that he describes it figuratively as inscribed on the tablets of the human heart. And the Psalmist terms that man "a fool, who says in his heart there is no God." The evidences of reason on this subject may be reduced to the following:

a) The mutable nature of all visible objects around us in the world. Every thing that is changeable cannot be eternal, therefore must have had a beginning. Hence this world either sprang into existence by chance, which is absurd; or created itself, which cannot be conceived, for it supposes a being to act before it existed; or it was created by another being, who is God.

b) The universal consent of nations affords another proof. It may indeed be objected, that some errors have in former ages been universally received, such as the belief of a literal rising and setting of the sun. But the cases are not entirely analogous. The error referred to, though it prevailed many centuries, at last vanished before the light of science, whereas the belief of the divine existence, instead of being impaired is strengthened by the march of improvement; and is more easily demonstrable now, than it ever has been in centuries past. Again, the belief of the rising and setting of the sun rested on mere occular testimony, in which there was an optical delusion;

[1] Isaiah 40: 12—31. Psalm 103. 104. Job 38—41. Acts 14: 15—17. 17: 24—29, &c.

in the other case our belief depends chiefly on a view of the abstract relation between cause and effect, between design and adaptation in the effect, and intelligence in the cause; whilst the subjects of occular testimony in which this adaptation is visible, are innumerable, and consequently the danger of occular delusion in all, diminishes in proportion as their number is great.

A few words, in this place, may not be amiss on the subject of the axiom itself: "*that every effect (or thing) must have a cause.*" This seems, indeed, to be a dictate of the human mind, and by leading us back in the chain of causation, it accounts for the existence of all things around us. But does it tell us whence that first cause came? Or is there contained in its elements any thing, which renders it more easy for the mind to conceive of a first cause as existing without a cause, than for any intermediate or second causes? In short, as we are ascending the chain of causation, does the assumption that each link is supported by that above it, tend to explain what sustains the final link, from which the whole chain is suspended? It seems doubtful; and is almost as impossible for us to account for the existence of the first cause, as of any intermediate link without one anterior to it. Yet would it not be as reasonable for us to stop at any intermediate link, and suppose it to be final? Because, such a supposed intermediate final link would account only for the effects posterior to it and flowing from it: and for the links above it in the chain, we must suppose another cause. Thus, if *rain* were regarded as a first cause, it would account for the creeks and rivers which fertilize our earth, and for the springs emerging from its surface: but we would be under the necessity of supposing another first cause to account for the vapours out of which this rain was formed, and for the caloric by which water was changed from a fluid to an æriform state, and for the atmosphere by whose superior gravity these vapours were raised from the surface of

the earth and ocean. In a word, if we stop in the causal chain so long as we can see another ulterior link; we stop without a reason for so doing, and thus will be compelled to suppose the existence of thousands of first causes instead of one. Nay it would be just as reasonable to regard every effect as the cause of its own existence. Hence if there is any truth in the axiom under consideration, the same reason which leads us to seek an anterior cause of the last effect, will urge us on in the pursuit as far as we can possibly go, that is, until we reach one final, ultimate cause. Moreover on the supposition of thousands of first causes, we could not account for the harmony of all the parts of the universe. But all these difficulties vanish on the belief of one first cause, which is therefore the most reasonable and the true supposition. And, finally, as we judge mind to be of a higher order than matter; it seems less reasonable to regard mere matter as a final cause of its own existence and of the existence of other things, than to attribute this character to mind.

c) The oldest and most comprehensible proof, however, is that usually termed the Physico-theological proof derived from the intelligent arrangement and design visible in the structure of the universe. This argument is of vast extent and irresistible force. Innumerable instances of it, may be seen in the human and other animal bodies, as well as in the vegetable and mineral kingdoms.

The illustrious philosopher Kant, who flourished in Germany about the close of the last century,[1] and was considered by many of his countrymen as the greatest philosopher who has lived since the days of Socrates, but whose writings at the present day do not rank so high, objected to this argument, that it does not prove the existence of the *author* of the universe itself, but only the existence of an intelligent architect, who planned and executed the present intelligent arrangement and design of

[1] Obiit. 1804, æt. 80.

its structure. There is some truth in this objection, but it lies rather against the form than the substance of the argument. The intelligence visible in the structure of the universe, does indeed only prove intelligence in the author of this structure; but the axiom above mentioned requires, that we suppose a cause for the matter itself of the universe independently of its organization. If we regard the matter of the universe as its own creator, we must admit several final causes; but as this is unreasonable, one only of the two can be the ulterior cause—either inert unintelligent matter is the cause of its own existence and of the intelligent organization of the world, or the intelligent cause of the design of the universe is author of both. That the latter is more reasonable we have above seen.

II. *The Attributes of God.*

The attributes of the adorable Jehovah may be partly learned from reason, by removing from our idea of his character every imperfection belonging to men; by attributing to him as the author of our being, every thing good found in us, and in the universe; and by regarding as infinite, all the excellencies thus attributed to him.[1] But the sacred volume gives us more satisfactory information on this subject.

The Author of nature being one and indivisible, his attributes are not distinct either from himself or one another. But owing to the imbecility of the human mind, we can conceive of the divine character only by directing our attention successively to its several parts. These several aspects which are entirely subjective in their nature are termed attributes; and although there are perceptible points of distinction between them, some of them are so nearly related, and coalesce in such a manner, that different enumerations of them are often given. They

[1] These are the well known processes of systematic divinity, termed via negationis, via causalitatis, via eminentiæ.

may be thus enumerated, self-existence, eternity, immutability, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, wisdom, holiness, truth, justice, benevolence (or love, or goodness.)

I. By the *Self-existence* of God is indicated that he has the cause of his existence in himself, and is not dependent for it in any degree on any being without himself. This attribute is evident from reason, which teaches us to acknowledge one ultimate first cause of all things, which being anterior to all other things could not be indebted for being to them when they did not yet exist. The scriptures also teach this attribute by representing God as the creator of all things in the universe, and by some of the names attributed to him.[1]

II. His *Eternity*, or existence without beginning or end, is taught by scripture,[2] and seems also to result from his self-existence.

III. The *Immutability*, or unchangeableness of God either in nature, attributes, or purposes, is taught by reason and scripture.[3] Any natural change in God would involve imperfection,

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[1] Exod. 3: 14. And God said unto Moses, I am that I am. And he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you. Gen. 1: 1. Acts 17: 24. 25, &c. Neither is worshipped by men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all, life and breath and all things.

[2] Psalm 90: 2. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Rev. 1: 8. I am the alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. Psalm 102: 25. 26. 27. Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture thou shalt change them and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

[3] James 1: 17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning. Num. 23: 19. God is not man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent;

either in his former or subsequent state; or a progression in knowledge implying previous defect.

IV. By the *Omnipotence*, or almighty power of God, is meant his ability to do every thing, which does not in the nature of things involve a contradiction. The incomparable greatness of the divine power may be inferred from the works of creation; its absolute infinity is taught by the sacred volume.[1]

V. The *Omnipresence* of God, signifies his being actually present at all times in all parts of the universe, and may be inferred from his constant agency in every part of creation, as well as from the word of God.[2]

VI. By the *Omniscience* of God, is meant his perfect knowledge of all things real, which either have had, or now have, or hereafter will have actual existence, in every place, and under any circumstances; and of all things possible in the physical, intellectual and moral universe under every possible combination of circumstances. This attribute is not only taught by scripture,[3] but required by reason, as a necessary part of infinite perfection.

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hath he said and shall he not do it, or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?

[1] Luke 1: 37. For with God nothing shall be impossible. Matth. 19: 26. But Jesus beheld them and said unto them, with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

[2] Acts 17: 28. For in him we live and move and have our being, as certain of your own poets have said, "for we are also his offspring." Psalm 139: 7—10. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

[3] 1 John 3: 20. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things. Heb. 4: 13. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do. Acts 15: 28. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 1 Chron. 28: 9. The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.

VII. The *Wisdom* of God is that aspect of the divine being, in which we contemplate him as promoting the highest possible good of the universe, by an infinitely perfect selection of the best ends, and of the best possible means for their accomplishment. Of this attribute we find much evidence in the structure of the universe, and more in the declarations and narratives of the sacred volume.[1]

VIII. By the *Holiness* of God is meant, the infinite moral purity of his character, embracing his love and practice of what is morally good, as well as his abhorrence of moral evil and exemption from it. Some evidence of this attribute may be seen in the perceptible connexion between virtue and happiness, vice and misery in the world, but it is more fully taught in the word of God.[2]

IX. By the *Truth* or *Veracity* of God, is meant that his declarations may always be relied on as sincere, and that the declarations which he has uttered whether promises, comminations or predictions, will infallibly be verified. This attribute is deducible from his moral perfection and is much insisted on in Scripture.[3]

X. The *Justice* of God is that trait of his character, by which with infinite accuracy and perfect impartiality, he grad-

[1] 1 Tim. 1: 7. Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, *the only wise* God, be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen. Rom. 16: 27. To *God only wise*, be glory, through Jesus Christ, forever, Amen.

[2] Isaiah 6: 3. One (seraph) cried unto another and said holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts, the earth is full of his glory. James 1: 13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawm away of his own lusts and enticed.

[3] Numbers 23: 19. God is not man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good? Heb. 6: 18. That by two immutable things, concerning which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

uates his rewards and punishments according to the minutest shade of obedience and disobedience exhibited by the subjects of his moral government, amid every variety of circumstance and situation. This attribute may be partly seen in the dealings of divine providence, and is fully taught in the sacred volume.[1]

XI. By *Benevolence*, or *Goodness*, or *Love* of God, is meant his disposition to confer on all his sensitive creatures, at all times, the greatest happiness which their nature and character qualify them to enjoy, and which it is consistent with the highest good of the universe, that he should bestow.[2]

The Trinity.

In addition to the aspects of the divine character already discussed, the Scripture represents to us a view of God altogether peculiar, and such as cannot with consistency be resolved into mere figurative language, or allegorical representations. It speaks of "a Son of God" who "existed in the beginning with God," who assumed a human nature, and dwelt for a season among men. It represents this Son of God, as in some respects distinct from the Father; for it speaks of him as conversing with the Father, about the glory which he had with him ere

[1] Jerem. 17: 10. I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. Acts 10: 34. 35. Then Peter opened his mouth and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. Rom. 2: 6. Who (God) will render to every man according to his deeds.

[2] 1 John 4: 8. 16. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us: God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him. Psalm 145: 8. 9. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. John 3: 16. 17. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life—For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

the world was, and consequently before his human nature was born. It represents this Father as having sent this Son into the world, the Son as promising his disciples, that after his return to the Father, he would send them another Comforter, the Holy Ghost. It attributes habitually a different name to each of these three, and represents each as sustaining a different and peculiar part in the grand economy of grace. Yea, in several instances the New-Testament describes scenes, in which they are represented as sustaining simultaneously different parts. It appears, therefore, that there is a real distinction of some kind in the Deity, that it is threefold, and that it is such as represents each of the three as a distinct subsistence or an agent, for distinct actions are attributed to each. This appears to be the idea intended by the Confessors in the Article before us, in which they hold this language, "That there is one divine essence, which is called, and is, God;—and yet that there are three persons, who are of the same essence and power and are co-eternal, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." How totally mistaken the representation is, which would make this distinction consist merely in variety of offices or official relations, can easily be made to appear. Thus it has been said, this distinction is none other than the difference between the ideas suggested by the phrases, George Washington, General Washington and President Washington. Let us make the trial, and every sincere inquirer after truth can easily decide the point. I (General Washington) came forth from George Washington (the Father) and came into this country (world); again, I (General Washington) leave this country (world) and go to George Washington.[1] Again, "But the Comforter which is President Washington (the Holy Ghost), whom George Washington will send in my name (the name of General Washington) shall teach you whatever I General Washington have said unto you.[2]" Again, "But when the Comforter (President

[1] John 16: 28. [2] John 14: 26.

Washington) is come, whom I (General Washington) will send unto you from George Washington (the Father) he (President Washington) shall testify of me (General Washington). Surely this experiment sufficiently proves, that the distinction spoken of by the inspired writers is not merely that of several offices belonging to the same person. The persons of the Trinity are evidently represented as distinct agents, to whom separate actions are ascribed. When we reduce to generic heads the representations of scripture on this subject, they seem to resolve themselves into the following propositions.

I. *That there is but one God*:[1] This is a dictate of reason also; for we cannot conceive of more than one infinitely perfect, self-existent and supreme being.

II. *Yet in this one God, there exist three hypostases,*[2] *or persons, or subsistences,* whose nature is unintelligible to us, but *of whom* actions are predicated individually, and who are designated by the distinctive names Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

I. *The man Jesus is represented as a real human being, born of the virgin Mary, and like unto other men in all things, sin excepted.* All that mortal eyes saw of him, was the creat-

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[1] Deut. 6: 4. Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord.

[2] Matth. 3: 16. 17. And Jesus, when he was baptized went up straightway from the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him and he saw the *Spirit* of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, *a voice from heaven* saying, this is my *beloved Son,* in whom I am well pleased. Matth. 28: 19. Go ye, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of *the Father,* and of *the Son,* and of *the Holy Ghost.* 2 Cor. 13: 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen. 1 Pet. 1: 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of *God the Father,* through sanctification of *the Spirit* unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. 1 John 5: 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the *Father,* the *Word* (logos), and the *Holy Ghost,* and *these three are one.* See also, 2 Thess. 3: 5. Gen. 1: 26. Gen. 3: 22. 11: 7. Gal. 1: 7. Is. 6: 8. comp. with 48: 16.

ed, human being, Jesus. The fact that the divinity dwelt within him, that the Son of God, or Logos, or second person of the Godhead, was united to him, as well as the extent and peculiar nature of this union, could not be seen by mortal eyes, nor even inferred primarily from his miracles ; for other men also wrought miracles, but must be learned only from his declarations and those of his apostles, the truth of these declarations being sustained by the stupendous miracles, and every other species of evidence which both he and they exhibited to substantiate the divinity of their mission.

II. *Yet with the man Jesus there was united another invisible being, of a very different nature and higher order, called Son of God,* and *united* in such a manner as to form a just basis for the reciprocal ascription of attributes taken from either nature, to the one being or person ; just as in the case of man, who consists of two parts, body and soul, the one visible and the other unseen by human eye, we say of the same individual he is mortal, meaning his body, and he is immortal, alluding to his soul. That such a higher nature was thus united to the man Jesus, is evident ; for

a) The scriptures predicate of Christ existence before the birth of his human nature,[1] yea declare that he existed before the world was made,[2] *from eternity.*[3] None will contend, that

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[1] John 16: 28. I came forth from the Father and *came into the world ;* again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. 6: 38. For *I came down from heaven,* not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 8: 58. Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.

[2] John 17: 5. And now, O Father! glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee *before the world was.* See also v. 24.

[3] 1 John 1: 2. We show unto you that *eternal life* which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. Heb. 1: 10—12. Thou Lord (Christ v. 1—10.) in the beginning didst lay the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands ; they shall per-

the human being Jesus existed before his birth of the virgin Mary, much less, that he existed from eternity. If, therefore, there be any sense in these declarations, they must refer to another being or nature; yet as they are affirmed of the Lord Jesus, it follows that a being of whom antemundane, yea eternal existence may truly be asserted, was so united to the man Jesus, in a manner analogous to the union of soul and body, that actions and properties belonging to either nature, may justly be affirmed of the one complex person.

b) The scriptures expressly call Christ "*God*,"[1] "my Lord and my God,"[2] "the true God,"[3] and "God over all;"[4] and apply other modes of expression of equivalent import. The explicit manner in which these names are thus applied ought indeed to prevent the possibility of misapprehension. But that they are designedly applied to Christ, and in their ordinary acceptation too, seems to us placed beyond all doubt by the fact, that the inspired writers,

c) Represent him as performing *such works* as God alone can perform, and as could not be attributed to him, if the divine being were not also united with him in so close and peculiar a way, as to make it just to affirm of him predicates taken from this divine nature. They declare him to be the *Creator*[5] of the universe, to have made all things both visible

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ish but thou remainest, and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

[1] John 1: 1. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and *the word* (*logos*) *was God*. Heb. 1: 8.

[2] John 20: 28. And Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God.

[3] 1 John 5: 20. This is the true God and eternal life.

[4] Rom. 9: 5. Whose are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all, blessed forever!

[5] John 1: 3. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

and invisible.[1] They also attribute the *preservation* of the universe to him,[2] and state, that he will at the last day raise the dead and judge them.[3] Assuredly all this cannot be meant of the mere man Jesus.

d) But the sacred penmen proceed farther still, and ascribe in unqualified and unequivocal terms the *attributes of God* to this visible, human being, Christ. Now it is admitted, that to his human nature no such infinite attributes can possibly belong; hence another being of whom they are predicable, must have been united with the man Jesus, in such a manner as to justify the application of these epithets to the one joint person, Christ. Of an irrational animal, an elephant, or a horse, we cannot say, as we can in reference to any man, he is mortal and he is immortal. Nor is any one at a loss for the reason. Although we, in both cases, see nothing more than the mortal body; yet, in the case of man, we have conclusive evidence, that with his visible body, there is united an invisible immortal spirit. So also, if the inspired writers had not believed, that the divine being, the Son of God (logos), was in an analogous but equally mysterious manner united to the man Jesus, it would have been absurd in them to attribute divine attributes to him.

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[1] Col. 1: 16. For by him (Christ) were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him. Heb. 1: 2.

[2] Col. 1: 17. And he (Christ v. 16) is before all things, and by him all things consist. Heb. 1: 3. Who (the son v. 2.) being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, &c.

[3] For our conversation is in heaven, whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Phil. 3: 20. 21. John 5: 23.

They ascribe to him, *omnipotence*,[1] *omniscience*,[2] and "the *fullness of the Godhead*," that is, the entire mass of *all the divine perfections*.[3]

e) Nay, if possible, they proceed farther still, and enjoin *divine honour* and *worship of Christ*, as a duty of Christians.[4]

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[1] Phil. 3: 21. According to the working whereby *he is able to subdue all things* unto himself. John 10: 18. I have power to lay down my life and I have power to take it again. 2 Pet. 1: 3. Acts 2: 24. 32. 3: 13. 15. 5: 30. 1 Cor. 6: 14. 15: 15.

[2] Acts 1: 24. And they prayed and said, thou, Lord, *who knowest the hearts of all men*, show whether of these two thou hast chosen. 1 Cor. 4: 5. Therefore (says Paul) judge nothing before the time, until the Lord *come*, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. Rev. 2: 23. And all the churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and the hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. (1: 18.)

[3] Col. 2: 8. 9. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, for *in him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily*.

[4] John 5: 23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him. 1 Cor. 1: 1. Paul—unto the church of God at Corinth, with all that in every place *call upon the name of* (invoke, worship) Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. Acts 7: 59. And they stoned Stephen, *calling upon God*, (*invoking*) *and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* In v. 55. it is said Stephen was inspired, "full of the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. 1: 2. Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. See also 2 Cor. 12: 8. 1 Thess. 3: 11. 2 Thess. 2: 16. 17. Rom. 1: 7. 2 Cor. 1: 2. Ephes. 3: 6. Acts 9: 21. Heb. 1: 6. Let all the angels of God worship him. Phil. 2: 10. 11. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those in earth, and those under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Rom. 10: 9—14. Rev. 5: 9—14. And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and hast made us unto God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld and I heard

No duty had been more clearly inculcated in the sacred writings of the Jews, than that of exclusive worship to the one God. "I am the Lord thy God—and thou shalt have no other gods before me—thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them nor serve them."[1] Now can we suppose, that these apostles, who were Jews, and to whom the Saviour himself had said, I came not to destroy the law but to complete it, would have either enjoined or practised the worship of Christ, if they had regarded him as a mere human being, if they had not literally meant, what they often elsewhere inculcate, that with the visible human being Jesus, there was united the Son of God, the word or logos, which was in the beginning with God, and which was God? Can it be that these men would trust their own souls, or enjoin it on mankind to trust their all, in time and eternity, to an arm of flesh, to a mere creature, mortal, dependant, as much in need of protection as themselves? Nay so notorious is the fact, that they believed the divine nature united to the man Jesus, that this article of their creed was well known even to contemporaneous heathen writers, and Pliny, the authentic and celebrated Roman writer, who lived thirty-eight years contemporaneously with the apostle John, says, "They, (the churches in Asia Minor) sing a hymn together to Christ as God."[2] Let every sincere inquirer after truth therefore cheerfully acquiesce in the revelation of himself, which God has chosen to give; remember-

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the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature—heard I saying: Blessing and honour and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

[1] Deut. 5: 6—9.

[2] Carmen Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem. L. X. Ep. 97.

ing that it is not a mere matter of opinion, but a truth of absolute obligation and eternal consequences: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned!

3. *The Holy Spirit is also represented in the sacred volume, as a distinct and divine person, or subsistence.*

I. Those who deny this proposition, and yet profess to receive the word of God, regard the passages which prove the *personality* of the Spirit, as mere figurative language, designed to represent the divine power. If that were the natural interpretation of the passages referred to, yea if it can be adopted without violence to the laws of language, it ought to be admitted. But this we think the reader will find difficulty in accomplishing. "But Peter said, why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie unto the divine power, (Holy Ghost)?" "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but blasphemy against the divine power (Holy Ghost) shall not be forgiven unto men." "The power of God, whom I will send unto you from the Father." "It seemed good to the divine power (Holy Ghost) and to us." Assuredly this construction is both unnatural and inadmissible; and abundant evidence exists, that the inspired penmen regarded the Holy Ghost as a *person*, or *agent*, in like manner as they did the Son. This is evident,

a) From those passages in which the Holy Spirit is designated by a *personal name*, and associated, *as a third being*, with the Father and the Son. An attribute of God assuredly cannot be classed as third agent; nor be regarded as anything beyond a property of God himself. But we find the scriptures, after they have mentioned God the Father and the Son, add the Holy Ghost as a third being.[1]

[1] Matth. 28: 19. Baptizing in the name of the Father, of the Son and of *the Holy Ghost*. 2 Cor. 13: 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of *the Holy Ghost*. 1 Pet. 1: 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,

b) From the account given of *the sin against the Holy Ghost.* It is declared, that every sin except this shall be forgiven men. That blasphemy against the Son of God may be pardoned; but blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be.[1] As we cannot sin against an attribute, the Holy Spirit must be a person.

c) From Peter's statement to Ananias, that he had *lied unto the Holy Ghost,* for we can see no significance in lying to an attribute.[2]

d) From the *personal acts* attributed to the Holy Ghost. Among these, which are very numerous, we will only specify a few. He is said to come from the father,[3] to speak,[4] to testify,[5] to predict,[6] to intercede,[7] to give gifts,[8] to work miracles,[9] to

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through sanctification of the Spirit, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

[1] Matth. 12: 32. Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world neither in the world to come.

[2] Acts 5: 3. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie unto the Holy Ghost?

[3] John 15: 26. But when the Comforter is *come,* whom I will send unto you from the Father.

[4] John 16: 13. He shall not *speak* of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he *speak.*

[5] Rom. 8: 16. The Spirit itself *beareth witness* with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

[6] John 16: 13. He (the Spirit) shall show you *things to come.* See 1 Tim. 4: 1.

[7] Rom. 8: 26. The Spirit maketh *intercession* for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

[8] 1 Cor. 12: 8. For to one is *given by his spirit* the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge; to another faith; to another the gifts of healing; &c.

[9] Rom. 15: 19. Through mighty signs, and wonders, by the power of the *Spirit of God.*

sanctify,[1] to decide doubtful cases,[2] to teach,[3] to be resisted or grieved.[4]

II. That the Holy Spirit is also a *divine* person, admits of so little doubt, that his divinity has been acknowledged by many who deny his personality.

a) The *names of God* are ascribed to him in scripture.[5]

b) Divine attributes are attributed to him,[6] eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, goodness, truth, power, &c.

c) Actions belonging only to God are affirmed of him;[7] such as creation, working of miracles, raising the dead, &c.

d) Divine worship is ascribed to him, in the baptismal formulary, and the benedictions of the New Testament.[8]

From these Scripture proofs it is evident that the sacred volume most undoubtedly does teach a threefold distinction in the Deity, a distinction which is not merely figurative, or modal, or subjective, but real. The intrinsic nature of this distinction is not revealed in Scripture, and is wholly incomprehensible to us. Yet is the charge of contradiction between the declarations of the sacred volume on this subject and the dictates of reason, which is so often and confidently made, demonstrably inappli-

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[1] 1 Cor. 6: 11. Ye are *sanctified by the Spirit* of our God.

[2] Acts 15: 28. It *seemed good* to the Holy Ghost and to us.

[3] John 14 : 26. But the Comforter shall *teach* you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.

[4] Acts 7 : 51. Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always *resist the Holy Ghost*, as your fathers did, so do ye.

[5] Acts 5: 3. 4. Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie against the Holy Ghost? thou hast not lied unto men, but *unto God*. See also 2 Cor. 8 : 17. Luke 4 : 18.

[6] Heb. 9 : 14. Christ who through the *eternal Spirit* once offered himself to God. Psalm 139: 7. 1 Cor. 2 : 10. 11. John 14: 17. Ps. 149: 10.

[7] Job 26 : 13. By his spirit he garnished the heavens. 2 Pet. 1: 21. John 6 : 63. 1 Pet. 3 : 18. 1 Cor. 12 : 3. 4. 11.

[8] Matt. 28 : 19. 2 Cor. 13 : 13. 1 Pet. 1 : 2. 3.

cable to a judicious statement of this tenet. The pious believer will find no difficulty in admitting this doctrine; for he sees its beauty and harmony running throughout the whole plan of salvation; yet, as this volume will doubtless fall into the hands of many who are perplexed with honest doubts on this subject, and as several respected individuals of this class, have expressed a desire, that the relation of the doctrine of the Trinity to reason might be considered in it; the writer subjoins the following seven propositions, the principles of which he trusts contain satisfactory answers to all such objections, that can be started. And, may the good Spirit of truth bless the entire discussion of this article, to the conviction of the sincere inquirer after truth!

III. *Relation of the doctrine of the Trinity to reason.*[1]

PROP. 1. *A divine revelation cannot contain any thing which is contrary to the plain and indisputable dictates of reason.*

By "plain indisputable dictates of reason," we mean those propositions in all the various departments of truth—mathematical, moral, &c., the evidence of which is such, that when fairly presented to our view, the constitution of our mind compels us to believe them. Such are all the self-evident truths, (sometimes called intuitive truths, or first truths, or constitutional judgments,) and all truths derived from them, the evidence of which is so strong that we are compelled to yield our assent. Such are the derived moral truths embraced in natural religion, that God is extremely powerful and intelligent (but not that he is omnipotent or omniscient). Now, as these propositions are the natural and legitimate product of the structure of our mental nature, they must be regarded as the instructions of the Creator, from whom our peculiar mental constitution is derived. Hence, if they were contradicted by his instructions in revelation, the Creator would contradict in revelation what he teaches in nature, that is, would contradict himself; which is absurd: therefore *a*

[1] See the author's translation of Storr's Bib. Theol. Vol. I. p. 467.

divine revelation cannot contain any thing which is contrary to the plain indisputable dictates of reason. In connexion with this principle, there is no dispute, unless it be alleged that we teach the existence of three Gods, and that the unity of God is a plain, incontrovertible dictate of reason, which would be contradicted by tritheism. To this we reply, *First:* Even if we did teach the existence of three Gods, there would be no dispute relative to this principle; for, the unity of God, can by no means be made indisputably evident from reason. Unity of *design* may be rendered in a very high degree evident, but unity of person cannot. But, *Secondly:* It is not the case, that Trinitarians believe in three Gods, as may be seen by a reference to their respective creeds, in all of which the belief in one God is as explicitly stated as it possibly could be. If it be still alleged that though Trinitarians do not profess tritheism, yet their doctrine inevitably leads to the belief of three gods; then this objection is answered under the following propositions.

PROP. 2. *A divine revelation cannot contain any proposition which demonstrably involves self-contradiction.*

It will be admitted that truth is always harmonious, and that no two truths of any kind are contradictory, i. e. subversive, of each other; neither are the relations of truth. A contradictory proposition is that, one idea of which is manifestly subversive of the other, and the ideas of which, the constitution of our minds compels us to believe cannot both be true: such a proposition is this, "a triangle is a square." But the Creator has so formed us, that of two propositions which are contradictory, if the first be clearly proved to be true, we are compelled by the constitution of our mental nature to believe the second false. For, as they are subversive of each other, if we suppose the second also true, it would destroy the first; so that the first would have to be (true) and not to be (true) at the same time; which is

contrary to an intuitive or self-evident truth. Therefore, as God is the Author of our mental nature, it is God who compels us to disbelieve one of two contradictory propositions; and hence, if his revelation contained any such propositions, he would himself compel us to disbelieve part of his own revelation. But God's object in giving a revelation is, that it should be believed; therefore he would not give a revelation and insert propositions in it which he compels us to disbelieve, that is, contradictory propositions: *therefore a revelation coming from God, cannot contain propositions which demonstrably involve self-contradiction.* In reference to this proposition, it has been alleged by some, that the doctrine of the Trinity involves such a contradiction. They reason thus: The idea of one and the idea of three are contradictory and subversive of one another, so that the same thing cannot be one and three at the same time. But Trinitarians affirm that God is one and three at the same time; therefore they affirm what cannot be true, i. e. a contradictory proposition. But the major proposition is stated in a loose and indefinite manner, and is not true in every instance; for a triangle is one and three at the same time, when considered as one among many figures, and in reference to its sides. In order to be true, that is, admissible, the major proposition must run thus: "It is impossible for the same thing to be 1 and 3 in the *same respect* at the same time." To this we assent; but in this form, the doctrine of the Trinity is by no means embraced under it; for it need not be told to the intelligent reader, that Trinitarians unanimously deny that God is one and three *in the same respect.* They expressly teach, that God is one in one respect, and three in another respect. The first respect they denominate by the term *essence*, and the second by the term *persons.* Therefore, as the Trinitarian proposition is not embraced in the major, the conclusion of course is not applicable to it.

But it has been objected, that some of the phraseology of

Trinitarians, expressive of the reciprocal relation between the persons of the Godhead, involves contradiction. Those, who advance the objection, reason thus: The one God is said to be threefold in his persons; but each person is the one God; therefore each person is threefold. But the major is not clearly stated. The idea intended is this, "God who is one (i. e. God in the respect in which unity is affirmed of him, namely, in *essence*) is three in person (i. e. in another respect, called *person*); but each person (i. e God, in each of the respects called *persons*) is the one God (i. e. is God, in the respect in which unity is affirmed of him, namely, in *essence*):—But this minor is not true: therefore the conclusion is a *non sequitur*. In order to cover the conclusion, the syllogism must stand thus: "God in (*essence*) the sense in which he is one, is also three (in the same sense, *essence*); but each of these three (*persons*) is God in the sense in which he is one (in *essence*); therefore each of these three (*persons*) is three in the sense (in *essence*) in which God is one." But it need scarce be mentioned that we deny the major and minor, as strenuously as any other persons can: for we deny that he is one and three *in the same sense*. If it be alleged, that explanations of the distinction in the Supreme Being have sometimes been attempted, and from these and the language of Trinitarians in general, it is evident that they understand the terms *essence* and *person*, in a manner which necessarily involves self-contradiction; it must be admitted, that this has unfortunately sometimes been the case. But this will not be surprising when we recollect the inexplicability of the divine nature, and the high degree of mental discipline which is requisite, before men can clearly discern the proper limits of the human understanding. Nor are the divines of the present day responsible for any phraseology but their own; and we believe they uniformly disavow the terms and ideas objected to. They believe that God is one in one respect, and three in another respect. To the respect in which he is one, they gave the

name *essence*; the other respect, in which he is three, they designate by the term *person*. But in so doing they do not intend to convey any positive ideas of the several respects to which they are applied. They are to be considered as equivalent to the Algebraic letters X and Y, which stand for unknown quantities or properties ; as if it had been said, "in *X* respect God is one, and in *Y* respect he is three :" and thus the propositions are more contradictory than if we were to say, "a triangle in *X* respect (i. e. considered as a figure) is one, and in *Y* respect (in reference to its sides) it is three ;" or, that "man in *X* respect (in reference to his soul and body) is two fold, and in *Y* respect (considered as an individual of our race) is one." We do not forget that the triunity of the triangle results from its material properties, inasmuch as, like all matter, it consists of parts ; and that God is without parts [ens simplicissimum] : but we do not adduce these examples to prove from analogy either the truth or the possibility of the Trinitarian doctrine ; its truth must rest on the divine record, and if that is established its possibility necessarily follows. We only state these as several unconnected propositions, but similarly constructed and of course equally void of contradiction. Moreover, as we do not define the distinction in the Deity at all, it cannot be urged that we define it to be such as depends on parts ; hence, the absence of parts in God, cannot be alleged as an argument against the distinction which is negatively proposed. For, it is impossible that there should be contradiction betweem terms the ideas of which are all strictly negative, and do not imply, by inference either more or less remote, any idea of a positive nature.

PROP. 3. *A divine revelation might naturally be expected to teach truths untaught by reason.*

That, after all our advances in knowledge, there always have been and still are many truths physical and moral, connected with our world, which are unknown to us, will be admitted. Hence, in giving us a revelation, it was at least possible for

God to teach us truths unknown to reason. But that if he gave a revelation, he actually would teach such truths (either to enforce truths previously known, or unconnected with them), is evident from the nature of the case. If God gives a revelation, such a revelation must have been necessary, or not. If it was not necessary, then God gave a revelation unnecessarily. But God does nothing unnecessarily; therefore, if he gave a revelation it was necessary. Now, the revelation which it was necessary for God to give, must either contain some truths or relations of truths unknown to us before, or not. But if it contains none but such as we knew before, it was unnecessary for God to give it. But it was necessary, or he would not have given it; therefore a revelation from God might naturally be expected to teach truths unknown to us before, truths untaught by reason. Such are the sanctions of his law, the doctrines concerning angels, the resurrection of the body, and the Trinity.

PROP. 4. *We have no reason to expect, that our limited capacities should be able to comprehend fully the modes and circumstances and relations of those truths which reason could not teach, and which are known only by revelation, any more than of those truths known without revelation; but it is natural to expect that the contrary would be the case.*

It is evident that the adorable Author of our being has fixed with the utmost precision, the limits of the human understanding. Our minds are so constructed, that whatever is necessary for the practical purposes of life, we can know, and know with certainty. But in the whole store of our knowledge, whatever be its nature, or whatever the subject to which it relates, there is not a single particular to which, in some of its circumstances or relations, there is not some mystery, something inexplicable attached. The fact of the attraction of gravitation we know; and it is upon the certainty and uniformity of this fact, that all its boundless utility in the mechanical arts, as well as in the ex-

planation of the phenomena of physical nature, depends. But where is the mechanic, or where the philosopher, who can explain the cause or the mode of operation of this wonderful principle? The fact of the tendency of the magnetic needle to the poles, is known; and relying on its certainty, and on the uniformity of the other laws of nature, the mariner confides his all to the bark which gravitation keeps upon the surface of the water, and spreading his canvass to the winds of heaven, steers with security his adventurous course through every clime. Yet who can explain the cause of this wonderful phenomenon, or the mode of its operation? But let it not be supposed that the nature and relations of these general and important facts are peculiarly mysterious. Mystery equally profound and equally great, is no less a concomitant of every object around us, even of such as appear the most trifling or the best understood. Let the pen with which I am writing demonstrate this truth. Who can tell how (in obedience to the divine will) it grew to its slender form? or what philosopher can explain the nature of that something, (called by men cohesive attraction,) by which its particles are held together? In short, in our present state we are a mystery to ourselves; and every object around us presents abundant evidence that the Creator has definitely fixed the limits of our knowledge, and told us, Hitherto shalt thou come, and here shall the proud range of thine intellect be stayed. Therefore,

It will be admitted, that either the intrinsic nature, or the mode of subsistence, or some of the relations or circumstances of every thing or truth connected with the present world, is incomprehensible to us.

And it will be admitted, that the incomprehensibility of those modes and circumstances of truths which are incomprehensible to us, arises either from their intrinsic nature, or from the limited character of our faculties; and that it is probably impossible for God himself to enable us to understand some of them without first enlarging our faculties.

And it will be admitted, that we know less of the future world than of the present, and that the little knowledge which we have concerning it, is in its relations more enveloped in mystery. Hence it follows, *a fortiori*, that if it is impossible for our present limited capacities to comprehend the modes and circumstances of the truths of the present world, which are less mysterious; much less can they comprehend those of the truths relating to the future world, which are more mysterious.

Again: The same relation between a certain truth which was unknown and other truths and principles which were known and understood, which led the mind to the discovery of the unknown truth, also implies some similarity or analogy or connexion with the truth which was known and understood; by virtue of which the truth discovered is also at least in some degree intelligible. And the same relation between the faculties of the human mind and an unknown truth, by virtue of which there was a peculiar adaptation in the mind for the discovery of that truth, rather than of others which it never could discover, and for a knowledge of which we are indebted to revelation alone, also implies a peculiar adaptation in the mind to understand the truth discovered. Thus the fact that the illustrious Kepler was able to comprehend those principles, a knowledge of which led him to the discovery that the orbits of the planets are not spherical but elliptic, also implied his ability to comprehend the properties and relations of an ellipsis; and his comprehension of these and of the related truths, conducted him to the additional discovery that the planets, in their revolutions, describe equal areas in equal times. The acquaintance of the great Sir Isaac Newton with the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and those enlarged views of the solar system as one connected whole, which led him to the thought that the same principle which brought the apple to the ground, might (as it reached without any sensible diminution to the summit of the highest mountains) as well extend to the moon and other planets, implied in him an

ability to comprehend the effects of this principle when once the thought had been started. Similar to this is the case of those truths, relative to the existence and nature of God, which reason teaches. Thus, it is an undisputed principle, that the framer of a machine, in the structure of which there are evidently design and adaptation to an end, must be an intelligent being. And perceiving the manifest design and adaptation in the construction of the universe, men may justly infer the intelligence of the Author of it. Now, the relation between the doctrine that God is an intelligent Being and the principle that every machine manifesting design and adaptation must have an intelligent being for its author, implies some analogy or similarity or connexion between them, from which it results that as the principle is intelligible, the doctrine which flows from it will be so also, at least in some degree; and that the same adaptation of the human faculties and knowledge of related truths which led to the discovery of the doctrine, or which enables us to perceive evidences of its truth, also implies, at least in some degree, the ability to comprehend the truth discovered. From these considerations it necessarily follows, that we have reason to believe that those truths which are contained in a divine revelation and are also taught by reason, are in their nature less incomprehensible and less involved in mysterious relations, than those between which and the knowledge obtained by our natural faculties, there is no such analogy or connexion as could lead to their discovery, or could afford evidence of their truth after they are revealed. Hence, it follows that among the truths contained in a divine revelation, the mode and relations of those which were taught by revelation alone [articuli puri] will probably be more mysterious than of those, of which the light of nature affords us some knowledge. And hence it follows, in reference to the Deity, that as the mode and many of the relations of those truths relative to the nature of the divine Being which are taught by reason, are absolutely incomprehensible, it may naturally be ex-

pected that if any additional truths are revealed to us on this subject, their mode and relations would be still more mysterious; inasmuch as they would have no analogy or similarity to the knowledge which we possess.

Finally; in reference to those truths relative to the divine Being (such as omniscience, knowledge of future contingencies and the like) which are taught by reason, we find that those relations of them which were incomprehensible by the light of reason, are just as incomprehensible after the truths to which they refer have been also taught by revelation, as they were before. But if it were the intention of God, that we should fully comprehend all the relations of the truths contained in his revelation, he would at least have perfected our knowledge of the relations of those truths which even reason had taught us to understand. But this he has not done. Therefore it is not his intention, and we have no ground to expect, that our limited capacities should be able to comprehend the modes and circumstances and relations of those truths which reason could not teach, and which are known only by revelation, any more than of those truths known without revelation; but on the contrary, it is natural to expect, that their relations would be still more enveloped in mystery.

PROP. 5. *We can believe, and it is our duty to believe, those truths of revelation which are untaught by reason, as far as they are revealed, i. e. made comprehensible, but no farther; for this is impossible, and the Scriptures do not require it.*

It will be admitted, that almost every thing in which we believe (taking the word in its popular latitude) is in some respect or other inexplicable. We believe that we exist (without requiring the famous argument of Des Cartes to convince us of the fact); yet there are a thousand things relative to the mode of our existence which we cannot understand. We be-

lieve the existence of all the external objects of which we obtain a knowledge through the medium of our senses; yet relative to every one, it were easy to propose some interrogatory to which no man could give a satisfactory reply. We believe in all those relations of visible objects and of abstract truths, the evidence of which appears to the human mind satisfactory; yet what reflecting mind does not know, that mystery envelopes all those particulars of our faith? The chymist believes in all those beautiful affinities of his science, the existence of which experience has taught him; and the lover of natural philosophy, in general believes in all those properties of matter and laws of the material world, of which observation or credible testimony assures him; but would he be entitled to the name of a philosopher, who (with our present scanty knowledge) should pretend that he fully comprehended the mode of operation and the relations of any one of these principles or laws? We believe that God is uncreated; but how any being could exist without having at some time or other began to exist, who can comprehend? Some of the ancient philosophers who received not the revelation, have inculcated the omniscience of God in very pleasing and explicit terms. Seneca the moralist, in admonishing his fellow men not to believe that they had escaped punishment because their crimes were concealed from the view of mortals, remarks, "nam ille in cujus conspectu vivimus scit omnia, he in whose presence we live (i. e. God) knows all things." The same proposition is believed alike by Deist, by Unitarian, and by the disciple of that glorious Redeemer to whom his apostle said, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." But is not the mode of the divine omniscience equally incomprehensible to all? Since, then, it is a fact that all men positively do believe a thousand propositions, when they cannot comprehend the mode and relations of the truths asserted in them; it necessarily follows that we can do it: which was the first point to be proved.

Again: as it will be admitted that we are under obligation to believe the whole of a revelation which has been proved divine, it follows that it is our duty to believe every part; and consequently those parts also which contain truths or propositions, the mode of which or many of the relations of which are incomprehensible to us: and this was the second point.

Finally: to say that we believe in a proposition, when we have no idea of the truth intended to be affirmed in it, is an absurdity; the thing is impossible, and cannot be a duty. By belief in a proposition, we mean the judgment of the mind that the idea affirmed by the terms of the proposition is true. Hence, to say that we believe in a proposition which we do not understand, is to say that we judge some particular idea to be true, but we do not know what idea. For we believe, either from evidence presented to our minds, or upon the testimony of one in whom we confide. We cannot believe in an unintelligible proposition, from its own evidence; for the evidence of the truth of an idea must be found in its relations to other truths or principles which are more evident; but if we do not even know what the idea in question is, much less can we know its relations. Hence it is impossible to believe in an unintelligible proposition, from its own evidence; for evidence unknown to the mind can have no influence in producing belief of any kind. Nor is it possible to believe in an unintelligible proposition, on the testimony of any being whatever. For it is impossible, by the laws of our mental nature, to judge that an idea is true or not, unless we know what the idea is. If an unintelligible proposition were contained in a divine revelation, we might express the general judgment, that, as it is of divine origin, it contains a truth which it would convey to a being that could understand it, whatever that might be, for God cannot lie. But we could not believe that any particular idea is true, on the authority of such a proposition, until we knew that it is contained in it. Hence it is evident that a belief in an unintelligible proposition, is a con-

tradiction in terms and impossible in the nature of things. And as God will not require what he has made it impossible for us to perform, and as he so formed the human mind, that we cannot believe what we cannot understand; therefore it is not our duty to believe any unintelligible proposition: which was the last point to be proved.

In reference to this proposition, it has been alleged that Trinitarians acknowledge their inability to comprehend the doctrine of the Trinity, and yet profess to believe it. This objection also arises from want of precision, which may be chargable perhaps as well to some of the orthodox as to their opponents. But it is easily solved, the writer thinks, by an application of the preceding remarks. The point at issue is not whether the few general ideas which the scriptures reveal, relative to the distinction in the Deity, are most closely connected with mystery, whether they are related to ideas which reason cannot discover and which God has not revealed; for this is granted, and it has been proved, in the first point of this proposition, that this is no bar to our believing those truths which are revealed. But the question is, are those propositions relative to this subject, which Trinitarians profess to believe, unintelligible? Those who differ from the Trinitarians, seem to confound those views of this doctrine which are revealed in Scripture and are intelligible, with the relations of these views or truths and their mode of subsistence, concerning which the holy volume is silent, and which are unintelligible. The former the Trinitarian understands and believes; it is the latter which he cannot comprehend, and these form no article of his creed, for they are not revealed. It has been evinced under the second proposition, that the terms used by Trinitarians to convey the ideas they find in the Scriptures on this subject, are absolutely void of all contradiction. A few remarks only need be added, to show that they are intelligible. Let it be remembered, then, that belief (in its popular latitude) in a proposition, is the judgment of the mind that the particular idea predicated of the subject

does belong to it. If that idea be a generic one, the belief does not regard its species, but only the generic idea which forms the predicate of the proposition. If the idea predicated be specific, the judgment of the mind of course relates to the specific idea and to no other. Thus when any person believes the proposition "God is omnipresent," he does not believe that he is omnipresent in this or that particular mode. And when the Trinitarian believes there is a distinction in the Godhead, he does not believe that it exists in this or that particular mode. Thus also in respect to the proposition "God is three in one respect, and one in another respect," which the Trinitarian believes taught in Scripture, the terms are generic and abstract, they define nothing relative to the specific nature of the things indicated by them; and our belief of these propositions can of course not be more specific, as it would be a belief of another proposition. And surely no one will deny that we have a distinct idea and a full understanding of the general abstract term *unity*, (it is superfluous to add the word *numerical*, for, strictly speaking, there can be no other unity,) and of the general terms *respect* and *reference*, and of the general abstract term *three*. Consequently, we can fully understand these propositions; and our belief in them amounts to this, that we believe them to be justly predicated of the divine Being: and hence of course they must be intelligible.

It were an easy matter, by admitting such confusion and want of precision, as are sometimes manifested in treating of the Trinity, to involve some of those doctrines relative to God which are universally believed, in equal if not greater contradiction. To the Deist we might then propose such reasoning as this: "You admit that God is here present in this house, not a part of God, but every thing of which God consists. But if every thing of which God consists is now in this house, it cannot be out of it; for it is impossible for the whole of the same thing to be at two different places at the same time, or it is impossible for the same

thing to be and not to be at the same time. Therefore, if every thing of which God consists, be now in this house, it cannot be out of it, i. e. it cannot be any where else, much less every where else, at the same time." But to this we should jointly reply, that our belief does not include the specific nature and mode of the divine omnipresence; and as the objection rests on the supposition that it must be like the presence of men &c. which is gratuitous, it falls to the ground. Yet precisely of this nature are some of the reasonings with which the Orthodox are sometimes pressed, and there is not even an equal ground for it. To be placed on a perfect equality, the proposition must stand thus: "God is present in this house in one respect, and at the same instant present in every other part of the universe in another respect." In this form it would not wear so much the aspect of contradiction, as in the form in which it is believed by all, Trinitarians and others; and in this unobjectionable form, it is *exactly analogous* to the Trinitarian proposition, "God is one in one respect, and at the same time three in another respect." But even if the Trinitarian proposition were stated thus, "God is one and three in the same respect at the same time," it would not be any more objectionable than the proposition, "the same one God (not a part of him) is now here present, and at the same time, in the same sense, present in every other place in the universe." For the ideas one and three are no more subversive of one another, than the ideas of the proposition, "it is possible for the whole of the same thing to be at two or a million different and remote places at the same time." If it be replied, that spirits have no relation to space; this is a gratuitous assumption, and it is impossible for us to conceive of a spirit except as existing in some place or other. And if this principle may be assumed, we may with equal propriety assume another, that spirits have no relation to number; although we cannot conceive of them except as one or more. And then, as God is a spirit, (the mode of his subsistence) the distinction

in him has no relation to number; and if no argument can be drawn from space against his omnipresence, then also none can be derived from number against the (personal) distinction in God. For there is no more contradiction between spirit and number, than between spirit and space; and it is equally impossible, with our present constitution of mind, to think of spirits excepting as connected with space and number. From these considerations, we should learn the importance of precision, when speaking or thinking on the subject of the divine nature; we should learn humility, from the manifest imbecility of the human mind; and should be wrapped up in adoration of that God whom none by searching can find out to perfection.

PROP. 6. *Doctrines which are above reason, could never be proved contrary to reason, even on the supposition that they were so.*

It is a position which is admitted by logicians, and cannot be denied by any person habituated to close thought, that before we can establish the falsity or absurdity of a proposition, we must understand not only the terms in which it is couched, but also those internal modes and relations of the subject and predicate, on which the supposed absurdity depends. Thus if we say, "a circle is a square," we immediately perceive the impossibility of its truth, because we are extremely familiar with those circumstances and relations (not all) of these figures on which the absurdity depends. But should we inquire of a person totally unacquainted with the principles of hydrostatics and ignorant of the fact in question, which of the two propositions is absurd, "that water will rise thirty two feet in a tube emptied of air, the one end being closed and the other open and inserted into a tub of water; or that it will not;" he would be at a loss to know which is the true proposition, much more to prove either absurd or contrary to reason. It were easy to illustrate the truth of this proposition by copious

exemplification. Let a few instances suffice. Should we say to a person unacquainted with optics, that the mind does not derive its perceptions of external objects of vision immediately from the objects themselves, but from the image of them formed on the retina of the eye, by the rays of light passing from the object through the pupil, and that the image is inverted; he would be equally unable to prove it either accordant with reason or contrary to it. Or should we say to one ignorant of akoustics, that sound, for example in the explosion of a musket, is not near the musket, but in the mind of him that hears it; or that those unpleasant perceptions which are called *discords* in music, are occasioned by the irregular and confused vibrations of the air, striking the tympanum or drum of the ear; he could neither prove the assertion true nor false, much less absurd. In the same manner, were I to assert that the modus operandi of the magnetic attraction would, if known, fully explain the intrinsic nature and mode of operation of the attraction of gravitation; it would be as impossible for any man to prove the proposition false, as for me to prove it true. But, should God reveal that proposition to us, it would not appear contradictory to us, nor could we prove it so: and the reason is, because we are ignorant of the intrinsic nature and mode of operation of both, on which its contradiction would depend. From all this it is evident, that before we can prove a proposition false or absurd, we must be able to understand not only the terms of the proposition, (for these are understood in all the above examples,) but also those relations and the intrinsic nature of the subject and predicate on which the supposed absurdity would depend. And consequently, as these are wholly unknow in the Trinitarian propositions, those propositions can never be proved contrary to reason, even if they were so.

PROP. 7. *But we know, that doctrines of a divine revelation the mode and relations of which are totally incomprehensible, i. e. those commonly said to be above reason, cannot possibly be contrary to reason.*

It will be admitted, that God is not man that he should lie. Hence when a revelation has been proved to be of divine origin, we know that all the doctrines taught in it are true; and consequently, those also the mode and relations of which are totally incomprehensible.

And it will be granted, that all the comprehensible relations of revealed doctrines, are perfectly accordant with those principles and propositions which the constitution of our mental nature compels us to believe, and which we call truths, i. e. accordant with our reason. Hence, as no evidence to the contrary can be produced, we are authorized to believe, that the intrinsic nature and those relations of a revealed truth, which are incomprehensible to us, that is, those which are said to be above reason, must also be accordant with the legitimate dictates of our mental constitution, i. e. with our reason.

Moreover, it will be admitted that truth must ever be consistent with itself. Hence, if some of the relations of a divine truth were contrary to our reason, all the relations of that truth must be so: and vice versa, if some of the relations of a divine truth accord with our reason, the other relations of that truth must also do so. But it must be admitted, that the comprehensible relations of those revealed truths, the mode and some of the relations of which are incomprehensible, accord perfectly with the dictates of our reason; hence it follows that the others must necessarily do so also, or they would contradict themselves.

Finally: this proposition may also be proved by a *reductio ad absurdum*. It is admitted that the dictates of reason are those propositions which the mental constitution of all men compels them to believe, that we are compelled to regard these

as truths and their opposite as falsehoods. Now, if we suppose that some of the unrevealed relations of a divine truth are contrary to these propositions, it follows that we are compelled by our mental nature to believe them falsehoods; or if we suppose that those relations of the truth in question which are contrary to our reason, are true, it follows, that the others which accord with our mental structure, are false, and consequently that God so formed our mental nature that we are compelled to believe a lie; which is absurd: therefore, we know that those relations of a revealed truth which are incomprehensible to reason, cannot be contrary to reason.

But whilst we thus commend this article of our creed as reasonable, let it not be forgotten that there are some practical aspects of the subject, which come home to the heart and involve the interests of every rational creature, and to which it is equally the dictate of reason that man should attend. Although we pursue our pilgrimage dependent on the power and subject to the laws of a God, whom our eyes see not and whom our hands cannot touch; we know enough to convince us that happiness cannot be found in the violation of his law, that we are the creatures of his power, who depend on him for every breath, and whom he could at any moment crush into atoms or banish from existence. Into the presence of this God, our judge, we are hastening as fast as the wheels of time can bear us; and although some men, in health and prosperity, may neglect God and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; yet when death begins his havoc on their frame, and heart and flesh fail them, be assured, reader, nothing in heaven or on earth or under the earth, can comfort those who are destitute of the favour of that God, an interest in that Saviour, who is the strength of our heart and our portion forever. No arithmetic can calculate the value of his smiles, or the horrors of his frown. They who obey and worship him, enjoy the favour not of an earthly friend, nor even of an earthly king, but of him who is

the King of kings and Lord of lords; whose legions are the armies of heaven, whose subjects are the inhabitants of thousands of worlds: whose dominion like his nature has no bounds and whose commands are borne with the rapidity of lightning, by the swift-winged messengers of his will to the utmost regions of his empire. They enjoy the protection of him, whose favour can fill its subject with unspeakable delight in this world, and pursue its object with ecstasies of joy in the successive stages of existence through eternity: or whose frown can pierce the heart of the rebellious, perverse sinner, with pangs of torment here, and bear down his hapless soul by the weight of his wrath in the blackness of darkness forever. They shall enjoy his approbation and be blessed by him, whose smile can animate the whole creation, and thrill the breast of every living creature with rapturous delight; whose frown can envelope the universe in darkness and blast every living thing with misery, despair and death! This glorious God promises his blessings to all who love him, and humbly receive the revelation of his nature and will—promises to support and protect them in the regions of the dead, to introduce them into the abodes of the blessed, into his immediate presence, to the enjoyment of all those ineffable delights which he can bestow! How glorious is the portion of those who serve the Lord of hosts; but ah, how awful, how fearful the lot of impenitent sinners, who fall into the hands of the living God!

Decrees and Providence of God.

The most prominent aspects of this important subject may be embraced in the following propositions:

I. What is the design of the divine providence or government?

II. What plan or decrees did God form to accomplish this design?

III. Has God really introduced into this plan any moral agent, i. e. any other efficient cause beside himself?

IV. Is sin really contrary to the divine will and to be attributed to these moral agents, or is God its author ?

V. Do the purposes and providence of God extend to all things ?

VI. Are the decrees of God relative to the future destiny of men formed in view of the voluntary conduct of each, and according to it ?

We premise, that by the decrees of God are meant the eternal and unchangeable determinations or intentions of the divine mind, either to cause or to permit every thing that actually comes to pass. And by divine providence is intended the entire agency of God in preserving and governing the universe to the accomplishment of his design.

I. *What is the design of the divine government and providence ?*

It is not difficult to infer the design of human governments from the character and tendency of their laws. Their general object, as it is happily expressed in the magna charta of American Independence, is the "protection of the governed in the enjoyment of their unalienable rights, Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness." In regard to some governments, an additional aim is to secure peculiar privileges to certain classes or ranks of subjects, or to the king or emperor himself. But that government is deemed the most perfect, whose constitution and laws contemplate in an equal degree, the highest happiness of all living under their influence.

The tendency of the principles and laws of the divine government is equally perceptible, and no reason can be assigned, why the inference from the tendency of a law to the design of the lawgiver, should not be as correct in the one case as in the

other. If it be a defect in a human legislator to enact laws, that tend to counteract the design at which he aimed; may we not safely ascribe exemption from this imperfection to the infinite Jehovah himself, and admit that the obvious tendency of his laws is a safe index of the design, for which they were enacted? But it is admitted even by infidels, that the dispositions and actions commanded in the sacred volume, are calculated to promote the highest happiness of men; and that the annexed sanctions tend to elicit obedience. It follows, then, that so far as man is concerned, the object of the divine government is to promote his happiness; as the scriptures also abundantly teach.[1]

Whether, as is the case with some human rulers, the divine Legislator had also an ulterior design in regard to *himself*, has been disputed. It is difficult to perceive, what object truly terminating in himself, the independent, self-sufficient Jehovah could have in the government of men. Elevated above every creature, he is independent of them for happiness; and infinite in felicity, the tide of his joys rolls on uninterrupted by human weal or woe. Would we stigmatize as ignoble the earthly monarch, the ultimate aim of whose government was not the welfare of his subjects, but his personal aggrandizement, and who, if need be, would sacrifice the former to the latter; how then can we transfer the grovelling conception to that exalted being in whom all perfections meet!

Nevertheless, the benevolent and patriotic governor is regarded as entitled to our praise though he sought it not, yea the more entitled to it, because its attainment was not the motive

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[1] 1 John 4: 8. God is *love*. John 3: 17. For God sent his Son into the world, *not to condemn the world*, but *that the world* through him *might be saved*. Psalm 145: 9. The Lord is *good to all*: and *his tender mercies are over all his works*. Psalm 17: 1. The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.

The agency of God in regard to all things in the universe, of his conduct. Thus is the ruler of the universe, the great King of kings entitled to our warmest affections and supreme adoration, on account of the transcendent glories of his character; and our obligation to glorify him is the greater, because the manifestations of his goodness and mercy were made to confer happiness on the creature. He desires, that we should glorify him, (that is, love, adore and imitate his glorious perfections,) in order that we may be happy; but does not make us happy in order that he may obtain praise.

Still, as the rational creatures of God can be truly happy only in proportion as they know, love and adore the perfections of his nature, that is, as they glorify him; the promotion of his own glory may justly be regarded as one of the designs of his government, although it is not the ultimate one. The glory of God, and the supreme good of his creatures, are inseparably united. In bestowing holiness and happiness on men and angels, his own glory is of course promoted, and in promoting his own glory, he necessarily confers happiness on his creatures.[1]

II. *What plan and purposes did God form for the accomplishment of this end.*

As the scriptures no where present a detail of the divine plan and decrees, the safest method of ascertaining them is that of a posterior investigation into the acts which God has performed, and which, from the predictions of the sacred volume, we know he will yet do. For it is admitted by all that what he does in time, he eternally intended or purposed to do; and the aggregate of his purposes or intentions constitutes his plan.

[1] 1 Cor. 10: 31. Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Rev. 4: 11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

We know, that the objects of *physical nature* he actually does (and therefore eternally intended or purposed to) cause to continue in existence, and, with few exceptions (miracles,) to act in that uniform manner misnamed by men laws of nature, but properly styled modes of divine agency. Every motion or action of any object in inanimate nature, which was not produced by the voluntary effort of a moral agent, is the direct work of God, and therefore the result of his intention or purpose. If some moral agent caused the action of the physical object, the effect was owing not primarily to the laws of that object, (the agency of God,) but to its having been *acted on;* and the result must be attributed to the agent, who exerted this influence. If my house is consumed by lightning, it is a direct visitation of God himself; but if the club of a highwayman prostrates me on the ground, God indeed permits, but it is the robber, a moral agent, who in the judgment of all men, is the efficient cause of the crime. It was Joseph's brethren who sold him into Egypt, but God caused the famine in the land.

The actions of *irrational* creatures he regulates by periodical appetites, by instincts and some traces of intellect, not amounting to responsibility.

The *voluntary* actions of his rational creature man, occur in a different manner. God could not consistently determine himself to become the efficient cause of these actions. But having resolved to create a number of moral agents, he determines indeed, efficiently every thing relating to the structure of their physical and intellectual nature, and the circumstances of their situation. Their voluntary actions, however, he influences only by his word, his Spirit and his providence. By these means he co-operates in the production of those holy actions, which in view of these motives, his creatures perform. And those evil deeds, which he does not restrain, he permits them to accomplish on account of the good, which could not otherwise have been effected.

is thus of a twofold nature, either that of efficient causation, or of permission; and his decrees or intentions contemplating it, must necessarily correspond to the acts.[1] The *decrees (intentions) of efficient causation* embrace all those acts, of which God is the efficient cause, such as the revolution of the heavenly bodies, rain, sunshine, the physical causes of epidemic disease, in short, all the operations of physical nature, all the *positive* influence which he exerts in the kingdom of grace, and every thing in regard to man, which does not belong to his moral agency. The *decrees, (intentions) of permission* are the divine disposition or purpose in regard to all those voluntary actions, good or bad, which his rational creatures perform, in the exercise of that power of choice which he bestowed upon them. To the production of the good actions, God contributes by his word, his Spirit and providence; but even of these he is not the efficient cause. Much less is he the efficient cause of those sinful acts, which his creatures perpetrate in violation of the law he had given them. With infinite accuracy he foresaw how his creatures would act in every supposable case. Such of their sinful actions, as could be made to subserve his great plan, he permits and overrules for good; whilst he prevents others in various ways, not infringing the freedom of his creatures. God had decreed (intended) from eternity to *permit* Joseph's brethren to sell him to Egypt, because he would overrule their wicked deed to the exaltation of his family. It was part of his "determinate counsel" (intention or decree) to *permit* the Jews "with wicked hands to crucify and slay the Saviour," because he could thus accomplish his purpose of making an atonement for the sins of men. But Peter expressly tells us, that the conduct of the Jews was not the *result* of God's decree, but that

[1] The writer would here recommend, especially to theological students, some excellent and able remarks on the divine agency in human actions appended to Rev. Dr. Ely's Synopsis of Did. Theology.

God had a "foreknowledge" that they would do it; and finding that he could elicit good from the evil, it was agreeable to his counsel to permit it. Hence they did it with "*wicked*" hands; for if God had himself produced the event by (a decree or intention of) efficient causation, how could the act be attributed to them, or the guilt be called theirs?

The prominent features of the divine plan may, therefore, be reduced to these: He intended or purposed,

a) To create the physical world and cause it to act with few exceptions (miracles), in a uniform way, that is, according to fixed laws.

b) To create the human family, to endow them with the powers of moral agency, to preserve these powers to them, though they should abuse them, and to place them in Eden on probation.

c) Foreseeing their fall, to provide a Saviour, and publish a new plan of salvation.

d) To communicate a revelation of this plan in due time to a portion of the human family, and to employ the instrumentality of men in its subsequent extension over the earth.

e) To appoint a day of judgment on which he will judge the quick and dead, and a time of retribution in which he will execute the sanctions of the law on all the subjects of his moral government.

The grand and ultimate design of God's government, like that of all good human administrations, must have been not the prosperity of A, B and C, as individuals (a part, yea a minority of the whole); but the highest happiness of the entire mass of subjects embraced in it. This was to be accomplished by the exhibition of the glorious attributes of Jehovah, embodied in the legal enactments and executive administration of a perfect moral government. By the above plan this noble design is fully accomplished, whether men will hear the divine precepts, or forbear. The unfailing infliction of punishment, mi-

nutely graduated to the guilt, exerts as certain an influence in deterring others from transgression, as does the hope of reward. It therefore tends as certainly to prevent vice, and to promote happiness in the individual himself, and in the moral government at large. The culprit, who atones for his crimes on the gallows, frustrates the design of the lawgiver only as far as his own happiness is concerned; but the arm of a just and efficient government, overrules his crimes for the good of the whole community, by holding him up in the convulsive agonies of death as a beacon to deter others from transgression. Thus one of the essential glories of a good government is exhibited even in the punishment of sinners.

III. *But has God really introduced into this plan any moral agents, that is, any beings who are the efficient*[1] *cause of their own actions, who possess the power of choice and voluntary agency?*

That there are many creatures in the universe, possessing different properties from those of mere inanimate matter, will not be denied. Who would contend that men and angels, for example, are endowed with no other laws of existence, and powers of action, than those of blocks or stones? But there are many points of difference between objects all of which are confessedly void of intelligent or voluntary agency. The mere fact, of different and even of higher properties, does therefore not decide the point. The question is whether there are any creatures known to us, possessing such properties as justly entitle them to be considered the efficient causes of their own actions, beings endowed with the power of choice and voluntary agency.

That there are such, and especially that we are ourselves

[1] By efficient cause (among creatures) is meant the agent who voluntarily and designedly produced the combination of circumstances or second causes, which was adequate to the production of the effect, and actually did produce it.

possessed of this character, is a point incontestibly proved both by reason and scripture.

This is evident, a) from the testimony of our own *consciousness*. We have just the same kind and the same degree of evidence, that we exercise acts of free choice, as we have for our exercise of recollections, judgments, conceptions, or feelings. Nor can any one really doubt his free agency any more than his existence. As our ideas of these acts of choice are derived from the same source as those of our other mental acts, it is probable that all men agree in practice, though not in theory, as to their exact nature. And, what is most important, no one finds any difficulty in distinguishing acts of choice from those of necessity. Does any man censure himself for the naturally tardy circulation of his blood, or defective secretion of bile in his liver, or for his not possessing the intellect of a Leibnitz, a Newton or a Mosheim? But for the neglect or abuse of the faculties which he does possess, for the voluntary transgression of the laws of his God, who does not feel responsible? Can any man therefore doubt, even on the ground of his own consciousness, that he is the originator of his own volitions, the efficient cause of that exertion of his mental and bodily power, which eventuates in what are denominated his free actions? It is impossible! The entire structure of human government is based upon the supposition of our being free agents; and the experience of mankind throughout six thousand years, has invariably confirmed the truth of the belief.

b) But certainly God himself, who penetrates with omniscient eye the most intricate of his works, knows whether he endowed man with the powers of free choice and voluntary action; and as a God of truth, will not mock us by calling on us to exercise powers, which we do not possess. Hear then the language of Jehovah: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and

death, blessing and cursing; therefore *choose life*, that both thou and thy seed may live."[1] "*Choose* YOU this day whom you will serve, the God of your forefathers or of the Amorites."[2] And thus, throughout the whole scriptures, is man addressed as a free, a moral agent. c) The same truth is evident also from the fact, that man not only can, but does resist and transgress the will, Spirit and grace of God.[3] It is evident also, d) from the fact that God punishes with eternal damnation those, who perseveringly resist and transgress his will; whilst he for Christ's sake bestows endless life on all, who choose the paths of holiness and truth.[4]

Thus we not only have the testimony of God himself, that we are free agents, the originators of our own volitions; but the omniscient God makes this fact the basis of his moral government over us in this world, and tells us that he will throughout eternity reward or punish us as the authors of our own actions. Can it be, then, that there is no other efficient cause in the universe but God, no other will which can originate actions contrary to his will? that the will of God, that is, God himself, is the author of those acts, for which he consigns myriads of his creatures to eternal perdition?

IV. *Is sin really contrary to the will of God, and was it originated by these moral agents, or is God its author?*

The sincere and unsophisticated believer will perhaps be shocked at such a question. Can that, he will say, be agreea-

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[1] Deut. 30: 15. 19. [2] Joshua 24: 15.

[3] Matth. 23: 37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often *would I* have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Acts 7: 51. Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye *do always resist* the Holy Ghost, (that is God,) as your fathers did, so do ye.

[4] 2 Cor. 5: 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that HE *hath done*, whether it be good or bad.

ble to the will of God, which God so solemnly forbids, which his holy word denounces in the most emphatic manner, and which he will punish in the world of retribution with everlasting torments? We suppose not. Yet are there some who represent all things not only as agreeable to the divine will but as unavoidably resulting from it. That God as a holy being must necessarily hate sin, is incontrovertible. How then can he consistently be the cause of that, whose existence he hates? The attempt which has been essayed by men of deservedly illustrious name to obviate the difficulty by stating, that God caused men to sin *freely*, seems, unsatisfactory; for no other acts of man can be either sinful or the reverse, except those which they perform freely; but the very circumstance of their resulting from the free volition of man, constitutes man their efficient cause, and by necessary negation, proves that, if that cause be man, it cannot be God.

Again, the supposition that God created precisely those individuals of whom he foreknew, that they would freely commit these very crimes although its impossibility cannot perhaps be proved, is not consistent with the character of God; because it makes sinful actions, as such, the direct object of his ultimate choice. It represents God, the lawgiver, as performing an act of efficient causation in order to produce the transgression of his own law. It is difficult to conceive, what more would be requisite to constitute him the author of sin.

The scriptures explicitly teach, that God does not even tempt[1] men to sin, much less efficiently cause them to transgress; yea that he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, that he cannot look on iniquity.[2]

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[1] James 1: 14. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

[2] Thou (O Lord) art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity. Numb. 23: 19. God is not a man that he should

That God, however, did not prevent, that is, *permitted* the introduction of sin into the world, is certain. And as he did permit it in time, he doubtless intended (purposed) to do so in eternity. God certainly could have prevented this calamity either by infringing the moral agency of his rebellious creatures or by not calling them into being. The question then presses itself upon the mind, what were the reasons, which induced infinite wisdom to permit the introduction of evil into the world? a) Numberless reasons may lie open to the divine mind, of which we worms of the dust are ignorant. Incalculable good may result to thousands of worlds unknown to us from this exemplification of the evils of rebellion against God; whilst no injustice is done to the moral agent man, by holding him responsible for his own free acts; and whilst even to the human family itself, the occurrence of sin is made the occasion of greater displays of divine benevolence and glory, than would have occurred without it. So that the aggregate even of human happiness, taking the future with the present world, is by the overruling providence of God augmented by the permission of sin.

b) It seems evident, that God could not have created man a free, responsible agent, without the ability to use that freedom, that is, either to transgress or obey the divine will. Exemption from those temptations which surround him, would not have universally prevented it; as is seen in the fallen angels. So that God must either permit man to have the ability to sin, or destroy his moral agency. But infinite wisdom regarded it as preferable, that man should be a moral, responsible agent, and therefore did not prevent the exercise of his voluntary powers. c) As to the physical evils of the world, we would remark that the number of those which are unavoidable is so very small, that it is far

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lie. Psalm 145: 17. The Lord is righteous in *all his ways*, and holy in *all his works*. Job 34: 10. Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity.

outweighed by those enjoyments of which they seem to be mere incidents. These evils are moreover disciplinarian, are designed as the means of greater good. Our liability to the inroads of disease, is intended as a constant memento to admonish us to prepare for death. It tends to prevent too deep an immersion in the pursuits of life, to wean us gradually from its enjoyments, and make us more willing to exchange the present for a better world. How many souls will at the great day, rejoice before the throne of God, who came out of "great tribulation;" who whilst they washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, poured out their own hearts' blood for the testimony of Jesus? Let, then, the sons and daughters of affliction not envy the lot of the prosperous, nor regard themselves as excluded from the tender mercies of God; but, in the spirit of faith, let them exclaim:

All, great Creator, all are thine;
All feel thy providential care;
And through each varying scene of life,
Alike thy constant pity share.

And whether grief oppress the heart,
Or whether joy elate the breast;
Or life still keep its little course,
Or death invite the heart to rest:

All are thy messengers, and all
Thy sacred pleasure, Lord, obey;
And all are training man to dwell
Nearer to bliss and nearer thee.

V. *Do the purposes and providence of God extend to all things?*

The purposes or intentions of God, let it be recollected, are of two kinds; either *causative*, which refer to his own intended actions; or *permissive*, relating to those actions which he fore-

sees that his creatures will perform, and which he resolves not to prevent. It appears obvious, that God as an infinitely perfect being must have a definite purpose or intention in regard to all the actions which he himself will or will not perform, and also in regard to all the actions of his rational creatures, whether he will or will not permit them. But the actions of God and those of his creatures, embrace all the phenomena which occur in the universe ; therefore it follows, that the purposes or intentions of God either causative or permissive do extend to all things.

But what God thus intended in eternity he actually executes in time. Therefore, as by the providence of God is meant the execution of his eternal purposes or intentions, it evidently follows that the divine providence also extends to all things.

The doctrine of our proposition is moreover inculcated by the sacred volume in a variety of ways. The scriptures teach it in explicit terms,[1] they narrate a multitude of examples exhibiting evident marks even of special providential interference.[2]

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[1] Matt. 6: 25—33. Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns : yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ? Moreover, which of you can by his anxiety, add one cubit to his life (that is to the *journey* of his life)? And why take ye thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ?—But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matt. 10: 29. 30. 31. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Acts 17: 26. 27. 28. In (by) him we live and move and have our being.

[2] Such as in the case of Joseph. Gen. 30: &c. The delivery of the apostles from prison, Acts 5: 19—25.

They represent the issues of all things both prosperous and adverse as under the control of God.[1] And they inculcate the propriety of prayer to God for his providential protection, guidance and blessing,[2] a procedure altogether nugatory if our heavenly Father did not govern the universe with a view to the moral benefit of his rational creatures, and if the character of his agency were not, in every instance, determined on in view of the foreseen situation and conduct of his creatures.

It has been objected by Socinians and some Arminians, that God cannot possibly foreknow, and therefore not specifically embrace in his plans and intentions the free actions of men. The error of this opinion is clearly established by the copious texts adduced in the margin, proving the absolute universality of his providence, and by the numerous prophecies explicitly predicting the free actions of men. Nor does there seem to be much force in the philosophical objection, that we cannot conceive how free actions can possibly be foreknown, as they are contingent in their nature. Because our inability to comprehend the mode of the divine foreknowledge of these actions, is no proof against its reality, much less against its possibility. Moreover, this opinion involves the denial of the divine omniscience, and implies the absurd position, that the Deity, like his creature man, is daily growing in knowledge.

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[1] Gen. 50: 20. But as for you, ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day to save much people alive. Amos 3: 6. Shall there be any evil (calamity) in the city and the Lord hath not done it? Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. Psalm 127: 1. Dan. 2: 21. Isaiah 10: 5—12. Luke 1: 51. 52.

[2] Psalm 145: 18. The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth (sincerity). John 9: 31. If any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth.

VI. *Are the decrees of God relative to the future destiny of men, formed in view of the voluntary conduct of each, and according to it?*

The affirmative of this proposition seems clearly evident both from reason and scripture, and was eventually held by Luther, Melancthon and all their immediate earliest coadjutors. That this statement of Luther's opinions is correct may be clearly seen not only from numerous passages of his works, but even from the XII article of the Augsburg confession, which he had reviewed and sanctioned, and in which the cognate opinion of those is condemned who maintain, that no believer can fall from a state of grace. For such is the connexion of the cardinal points of the theological system, that the advocates of this doctrine cannot believe that repentance and faith, are the effects of election, but must rather regard them as conditions of it. The writer however feels constrained to say that neither Luther nor his earliest adherents, had receded far enough from the Augustinian error to be entirely consistent in their theological phraseology. The illustrious Calvin and his supralapsarian followers afterwards maintained the unconditionality not only of election but even of reprobation. This opinion has, however, long since been abandoned by the great body of the Reformed church in Continental Europe, who have adopted the Lutheran view. The principal Congregational divines of New England are also unwilling to term these decrees of God unconditional or absolute, however they may differ as to the circumstances which in the divine mind led to their adoption.

a) That the decrees of God relative to the future destiny of men, were formed in view, that is, with a full knowledge of the conduct of men, incontrovertibly flows *from the absolute omniscience of God.* For, as God knows all things, he cannot be ignorant of the precise circumstances of every individual, at any

moment of his existence. But of this his essential omniscience, he could not divest himself when he formed his purposes or intentions; those purposes, therefore, were adopted in view of this knowledge. Indeed, it would be the height of absurdity to imagine, that he, to whom all things are naked and open, would, when forming a purpose relative to any individual, voluntarily close his eyes on the situation and conduct of the moral agent contemplated by his decrees!

Whether God, who in the act of forming such a purpose, certainly possessed, perfect knowledge of the situation and conduct of the individuals to whom it referred, did determine nevertheless to treat them irrespectively of their conduct, seems identical with the question, whether he resolved to deal with them *as with moral agents or not.* For

b) The *very nature of a moral government* requires, that sanctions be attached to the law given to regulate the conduct of its subjects. And by the attachment of sanctions to a law, is meant that the moral governor will bestow blessings and inflict punishment on his subjects according as they obey or transgress the given law, and actually because of such obedience or transgression. Now it is admitted, that man is a moral agent, that God is his ruler and has placed him under a moral government which, though modified by the gospel, is a moral government still. Hence it follows, that God must treat him as a moral agent, must reward or punish him according to his conduct in reference to the law under which he was placed. To suppose a moral government, in which rewards and punishments were held up as motives to obedience, without the design of executing the sanctions thus solemnly published, is to suppose a government based on ulterior deception; which would be unworthy of God, and merit the appellation not of a moral, but of an immoral government. It is evident, then, from the nature of a moral government, that God ought to apportion rewards and punishments to his subjects, according as they accept or reject

the terms of salvation offered them. But what God ought to do, he invariably will do: therefore he will administer future retribution according to the voluntary conduct of his moral subjects. Moreover what God certainly will do in time, he in eternity intended or purposed to do; and these intentions are his decrees. Therefore God from eternity decreed to distribute future happiness or misery according to the voluntary conduct of each individual.

c) The same truth is *also* clearly reflected from the pages of *the sacred volume*. It will be admitted, that the manner in which God actually and certainly will distribute happiness and misery in the future world, is the precise mode which he eternally intended or purposed to pursue. If, then, it can be made apparent, that the Judge of the universe certainly will reward men acccording to their works, it will follow, that he eternally designed, purposed, decreed to do so. But the sacred volume does most explicitly declare that God will "render unto every man according to his works," that "every one shall receive the things done in his body" and that "what a man soweth, that shall he also reap.[1]" Therefore, as it is certain, that God will in the world to come, treat men according to their voluntary ac-

[1] I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened which was the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books *according to their works*. 2 Cor. 5: 10. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may *receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done*, whether it be good or bad. Matt. 16: 27. The son of man shall come in his glory, with his angels, and then shall he *reward every man according to his works*. Isaiah 3: 10. 11. Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. Jer. 17: 10. I the Lord search the heart and try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. 1 Pet. 1: 17. God *without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work*. Eccl. 12: 4. God will bring every man's work into judgment. Gal. 6: 7. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap. See also Psalm 62: 12. Rom. 2: 6. Rev. 2: 23. 22: 12.

tions, it follows that he always, that is, eternally intended to do so. And as "the eternal intentions of God are his decrees," it necessarily follows, that his decrees relative to the future destiny of men, were formed both in view of their voluntary agency and according to it; or, in other words, the decrees of election or predestination to eternal life, and of reprobation to endless misery, are not unconditional, but are based on the foreseen voluntary conduct of the individuals.

Again, is not the contrary supposition directly opposed to the scripture representations of the *divine character*? God is described as a God of "love," "who hath no delight in the death of sinners;"[1] how then could he have decreed to consign the major part of them to endless perdition, regardless of their conduct? Or how could he create the majority of the human race under circumstances, in which they must inevitably continue in sin, and then finally punish them forever for not exercising that repentance which was impossible to them, or that faith, which though it is the gift of God, he had beforehand determined never to give them? He is represented as "a God of long-suffering to us-ward, not being willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."[2] But how could his tolerating the non-elect be an act of long suffering if they had been born under circumstances in which however long he might wait, they could not repent without his special grace, and this he was determined to withhold from them? How could the scriptures say, that he was not willing that any should perish, if he had determined forever to withhold from the great mass of mankind that aid, without which they inevitably must perish? Could the inspired penmen say "he wills that all should come to repentance," if he had determined to leave them forever in a state destitute of grace, in which repentance is impossible?

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[1] Ezek. 18: 32. For I have *no pleasure in the death of him that dieth*, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live.

[2] 2 Pet. 3: 9.

Moreover, what *sincerity* could there be in God's command to preach the gospel to every rational creature, if he had determined to withhold from the greater part of them, that gracious influence without which they could not receive the gospel, and must be eternally condemned for not believing in Christ as their Saviour, when according to the same view he really was not their Saviour, having never made provision for *their* salvation?

And, how could we reconcile with the *justice* and *impartiality* of God, the opinion, that whilst he calls us all into existence with a depraved nature, he should irrespectively of our conduct, elect some of us to heaven and consign the residue to hell? The scriptures tell us that God is "no respecter of persons,[1] but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.[2] How could this be said, if God had made among his creatures a distinction of such incalculable magnitude, and eternal duration, as would be implied in the irresistible salvation of some, and unavoidable damnation of others?

But that God will treat men according to their voluntary conduct, and that his decrees about his future treatment of them are based on his foreknowledge of what that conduct will be, is also evident from those portions of scripture, which expressly declare, that our predestination to eternal life actually is based on the divine "*foreknowledge*,"[3] and that men are elected ac-

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[1] 2 Chron. 19: 7. Rom. 2: 11. For there is no respect of persons with God.

[2] Acts 10: 34. 35. Eph. 6: 9. Col. 3: 25. But he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons. 1 Peter, 1: 17. And if ye call on the Father, *who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work*, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

[3] Rom. 8: 29. For whom *he did foreknow* he also did *predestinate* to be conformed to the image of his Son.

cording to the *foreknowledge* of God.[1] Now, as Paul here tells the Roman Christians they were predestinated according to the divine foreknowledge, and Peter informs the believers in Asia Minor that they were elected in the same way, it follows either that all the elect are thus chosen, or that God pursues one plan in electing the Christian of Rome and Lesser Asia, and a different one for the rest of the world. But as the latter cannot be supposed, the former inference remains true.

In view, then, of all these dictates of reason and declarations of the inspired volume, the writer cannot, after the most solemn and conscientious investigation of this subject, resist the belief, that the decrees or intentions of God concerning the future destiny of men, are formed in view of the voluntary conduct of each and also according to it. But are there no passages of scripture which seem to be inconsistent with this doctrine, and by which many upright persons have been led to entertain different views? There doubtless are, and they deserve a serious notice. The most important are the following and others of similar import.

1. John 15: 16. Ye have not chosen me (says Jesus) but I have chosen you and appointed (εθηκα) you &c. That this passage refers to the Saviour's choosing them as his *apostles*, is evident, because he is here addressing his apostles; for he says "ye have been with me from the beginning;"[2] tells them that they would be persecuted by the Jews as he had been, which was true of the apostles, but not of believers in general. But even if in violation of the context, we suppose this passage to refer to election to eternal life, it would only prove, that God was the first mover of our salvation, but not that he bestows it on us unconditionally.

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[1] 1 Peter 1: 2. *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God* the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling by the blood of Jesus Christ. See also 2 Thess. 2: 13. James, 2: 5. Mark, 16: 16.

[2] v. 27.

2. Acts 13: 48. And as many as were ordained (or according to the Greek τεταγμενοι disposed for, or arranged or prepared for) eternal life, believed. This passage is undoubtedly mistranslated. The word rendered ordained, has not that meaning, either in the scriptures or profane writers, but signifies disposed, set in order for. Thucydides says "the Greeks marched up τεταγμενοι *in good order*, well arranged." The meaning of the passage is, that "As many as were inclined for eternal life (were seriously inclined) believed," whilst those who cherished their prejudices, and were not disposed to seek eternal life, remained in unbelief.

3. Ephes. 2: 8. By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Hence it has sometimes been argued that faith is the consequence of election, and cannot be the condition of it. It is indeed true, that faith is the gift of God, but it is *mediately* bestowed on men. Faith, says Paul, comes by *hearing*, and hearing by the (preaching of the) word of God.[1] Whilst we pay due attention to these means of grace, the Spirit of God through this instrumentality works faith in us. The renovated health of the convalescent, is really the gift of God, although it was not effected by miracle, but by the careful exhibition of those medicines which the Author of nature also provided. Nor has saving faith ever been wrought in any one, whilst he perseveringly resisted the Spirit of truth, and refused all attention to the means of grace; never until he had surrendered his heart to God and commenced "*working out his own salvation* with fear and trembling."[2]

4. Ephes. 1: 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, *according to the good pleasure of his will.* This passage teaches that God predestinated the elect according to his own will, but is perfectly silent as to whether it was his will to treat men as moral agents, according to their conduct, or whether it was his will regardless of

[1] Rom. 10: 17. [2] Phil. 2: 12.

the conduct of men to elect some and reject others. That the sovereign of the universe will deal with men according to his will is certain; and that, having made them moral agents, he would *will* to treat them as such, that is, according to their conduct, seems equally evident. Hence this passage presents no difficulty.

5. Rom. 9: 11. &c. For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, in order that the purpose of God according to election might stand, (that is, in order that the purpose of God might be based on his own choice) it was said unto her (Rebecca,) "The elder shall serve the younger." It is evident from this and other verses of this chapter, that the apostle clearly inculcates the doctrine, that God in his dealings with the descendants of Abraham, had granted certain privileges to some which were not bestowed on others. And the apostle clearly teaches, that the reason which actuated the divine mind in this distinction, was not found in the conduct of the parties—for the distinction was determined on before they were born; but in the infinite wisdom, sovereignty and good pleasure of God. The only point of dispute is, what was the blessing thus distributed? Was it eternal life? Then this passage and entire chapter would indeed represent the divine being, as relinquishing his moral government over men, and giving unto every one not (as he says he does) "according to the fruit of his doings," but regardless of his conduct. But it is evident, that this passage and those which follow it in this chapter, treat not of personal election to salvation; but the choice of a portion of the descendants of Abraham to be his external, visible people, whom he determined to separate from the rest of mankind and *make the depositories of his religion.* This is evident from various considerations. a) The Jews had so long regarded themselves as the peculiar people of God, that they could not brook the admission of the gentiles to equality of privileges under the gospel dispensation. To remove this error, Paul tells them, that the election of their father Jacob and

his descendants to this privilege in preference to Esau and his posterity, was not owing to any personal merit in the former; for the election or choice was made before either of them was born, or had done good or evil. b) Moreover, he adds, that many of those thus elected, were not true children of God, " for they are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children."[1] But all admit, that the elect, that is, those who will die believers and therefore be saved, are children of Abraham and of God in the highest sense. c) The apostle removes all doubt by stating what it was, to which the descendants of Jacob were elected. He tells the Jews, that it was determined, that " the elder (Esau) shall (be in subjection) serve the younger (Jacob); that is, the descendants of Jacob shall, by the special providence of God, be prospered as a nation, be chosen as the visible people of God, to whom should pertain the adoption, the (ceremonial) service, (the giving of) the law, and of whom concerning the flesh, Christ should come, and those of Esau shall become subject to them; as was the case when the Edomites in the reign of David were subjected to the Israelites. Here certainly is nothing about personal election to salvation. Yet Paul explicitly tells us in v. 11. 12. that *this* was the purpose of God, which was to stand or be based, not on works, but exclusively on the choice (election) of God. Now this election to the privilege of belonging to the external people of God, does not necessarily involve salvation, and is no more difficult to be reconciled with the justice of God, than his permitting some men to be born with a greater degree of talents or wealth than others. Especially when we recollect the principle of his moral government, which he has announced to us, that " from those to whom much has been given shall much be required," and " the servant that knew his master's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many

[1] Verse 6. 7.

stripes." It was in his choice or election to these external privileges, that God loved Jacob, and hated, that is, did not thus favour Esau.[1] And well might the apostle ask, has not that Being, whose is the earth and the fullness thereof, a right to dispense these favours as he pleases, as a potter out of the same clay makes different vessels, designed for various uses, some more honourable than others? With the same sovereignty, says the apostle, does God proceed even in the retributions of his providence. "Pharaoh" was a cruel, abandoned wretch, whom he might in justice have cut down much sooner, but "he suffered him to stand" and even "raised" him to greater temporal distinction, in order that his "power and name might be declared throughout all the earth,"[2] when his signal overthrow should come upon him. That God did by any positive influence harden the heart of Pharaoh, is not only contrary to the character of God as revealed in scripture; but directly contradicted by the inspired writer of the first book of Samuel, who says, "Wherefore do ye harden your hearts, *as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts.*[3]

6. John 12: 37—40. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That (or as the sense is, thus) the saying of Esaias the prophet *was* fulfilled, which he spake, Lord who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe (because they had resisted the evidence of his miracles, and the "report" or preaching of the prophet,) As Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, (that is, after they resisted the evidence of the Saviour's miracles and preaching, he withdrew his Holy Spirit from them, and abandoned them to their own judicial blindness and hardness, and, in this condition, they could not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor be converted to God, that he should save them or their city.)

[1] Verse 13. [2] Verse 17. [3] 1 Sam. 6: 6.

7. The supposition, moreover, that God would be regulated in his decrees or intentions, by the voluntary conduct of man has sometimes been considered inconsistent with the divine freedom and independence. If God, however, possesses freedom, he was free to create moral agents if he chose; and if, as all admit, he did choose to create moral agents, why should either his freedom or independence prevent him from executing his intentions? And if it is not inconsistent with any attribute of God to treat men according to their voluntary conduct, that is, to treat them as moral agents, it could not be inconsistent for him to intend or purpose to do it. But all acknowledge, that God does deal with men as moral agents, without doing violence to any of his attributes; therefore his intentions or decrees to do so, cannot conflict either with his freedom or independence.

The specific voluntary agency of the sinner, which is the condition of salvation under the Christian dispensation, is *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a voluntary acceptance of the offers of mercy, on the terms of the gospel, as a naked gratuity, purchased by the blood of Christ.*[1] That this faith, or reliance on the merits of the Saviour, is pleasing to God, it were absurd to deny; for he has himself commanded it. Yet, it is equally evident, that no gift ceases to be such, because those to whom it is tendered choose to accept it. *Hence, the procuring, meritorious cause of salvation,* CANNOT WITH PROPRIETY BE SOUGHT IN THE FACT THAT WE ACCEPT IT (BELIEVE); BUT IN THE EFFICACY OF THAT DIVINE LOVE, DISPLAYED IN THE BLOODY SCENES OF CALVARY, amazing even to the angelic world; and

[1] For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever *believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life. Tit. 3: 5. *Not by works of righteousness* which we have done but according to *his* mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost: which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

our faith or determination to accept it, is merely the appointed condition, the performance of which by us renders it morally possible for God to bestow salvation on us.[1]

But although it is thus evident, that our salvation is not of works but of grace; that matchless, free, eternal grace contrived and executed the wondrous plan; yet shall we be rewarded according to our works." Yes, humble Christian! Thy works shall follow thee, not as a ground of justification, not as a satisfaction to the demands of the violated law; for Christ and his merits are the only basis of our hope, the only satisfaction for sin. He alone bare our sins in his own body on the tree. By his stripes alone we are healed. But the works of the believer shall be the measure of his future gracious reward. Though salvation is of grace, it is accepted or rejected by the voluntary faith or unbelief of every individual; and the relative degree of the future blessedness of believers, will be exactly commensurate with the relative gradation of their faithfulness and activity in life. They who were distinguished on earth for piety and zeal will be distinguished in heaven. He that converts a sinner from the error of his way, shall receive a crown of rejoicing; and they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars in the firmament of heaven!

It is obvious, that these decrees or intentions of God, must

[1] The following language of that highly distinguished American divine, Dr. Dwight, appears entirely to accord with the view here expressed. "Should it be asked, why are not all men pardoned? I answer, because all mankind do not evangelically believe in the atonement, and its author. No man is pardoned merely because of the atonement made by Christ; but because of his own acceptance, also, of that atonement, by faith. The way is open, and equally open to all; although all may not be equally inclined to walk in it. The proffers of pardon on the very same conditions, are made with equal sincerity and kindness, to every man. He who does not accept them therefore, ought to remember, that nothing stands in his way, but his own impenitence and unbelief."—Theology, Vol. II. p. 218.

be *eternal*:[1] for it is admitted by all, that what God does in time he eternally intended to do.

It is equally clear, that they are *unchangeable*,[2] for no circumstance could possibly arise, unforeseen by the omniscient God, requiring any change in his contemplated action.

Of Creation and Preservation.

"The one God," say the Confessors, "is the Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible."

I. The sacred volume represents God as the *Creator* of the "heavens and the earth" and "all things in them.[3] Whether by the phrase "the heavens and the earth" Moses meant to designate our own earth alone, or refers to the creation of all the various portions of the universe,[4] has been disputed. The question also whether God created a plurality of worlds, was discussed as early as the eighth century of the Christian era; and its decision must depend on our definition of the term. If by world we mean only our earth, then doubtless God created a plurality of worlds; for it cannot be denied, that the other planets and innumerable heavenly bodies are also the workmanship

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[1] Eph. 1: 4. According as he hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. 2 Tim. 2: 9.

[2] Rom. 8: 29. 30. For whom he did *foreknow* (of whom he foreknew, that they would accept the offers of salvation) he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate (those whom his omniscience "foreknew" v. 29. them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

[3] Gen. 1: 1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Col. 1: 16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible, and invisible; whether, they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him.

[4] Matth. 28: 18. Acts 4: 24. 14: 15.

of his hands; and that strong reasons from analogy exist for the opinion, that they are inhabited by living beings, and moral agents, who unite with us in forming the grand moral empire of Jehovah. The term world, however, also signifies the entire mass of all created things, considered as one whole.

II. The *term creation* may signify the formation of something out of pre-existent matter, or out of nothing. But whether the Mosaic creation refers to the present organization of matter or to the formation of its primary elements, it is not easy to decide. The question is certainly not determined by the usage of the original words (בָּרָא, עָשָׂה), which are frequently employed to designate mediate formation. Should the future investigations of physical science, bring to light any facts, indisputably proving the anterior existence of the matter of this earth, such facts would not militate against the Christian Scriptures. But we should ever bear in mind, that to the omnipotent Jehovah, the immediate creation of the world is perfectly as easy as its formation from any pre-existent materials.

III. The *time* when the creation occurred, was about 5833 years ago, that is, about 4000 years before the birth of Christ. It is probable that it occurred in autumn; as the fruits of the earth and all other things were created in a state of maturity.[1]

The time occupied in the creative work, was six days. The instantaneous creation of the whole universe would have been equally easy to the creative will of God; but for wise reasons the Author of the universe preferred successive creation, perhaps to render these displays of his omnipotence intelligible to the higher spirits, the morning stars[2] that sang together, and the

[1] Gen. 2: 5. And (God made) every plant of the field before it was in the earth and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

[2] Job 38: 7. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy

sons of God which shouted for joy, when earth's foundations were laid.[1] When God had completed the creation, he beheld the work of his hands, and pronounced it very good,[2] that is, free from moral or physical evil, and well calculated to effect the design, with which he created it.

IV. Having in six successive days completed the formation of all things, the Author of our being *rested*,[3] that is, ceased from creation on the seventh day; and *blessed it*[4] and set apart that portion of time for sacred purposes. Thus did our heavenly Father formally institute a day of rest or abstinence from worldly labour: By sanctifying it, he set it apart for holy purposes; and thus rendered obligatory on the entire human family of every generation and age, the religious observance of one day in seven.

V. But matter either in its chaotic state or in an organized form does not possess the attribute of self-subsistence. To the same divine hand, therefore, which called it into existence, must its continuance in being be attributed. The *preservation* of the universe, in many of its parts, is nothing else than *continued creation*. It is true, God causes the stated reproduction of all the various species of creatures according to fixed laws, that is, in a uniform way. He also effects his object mediately, by preserving to all the particles of matter, the properties which he originally bestowed on them; and employs objects already existing, in the reproduction of new. Nevertheless, what does the acorn know of the mountain oak, which in the process of time

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[1] Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? v. 4.

[2] Gen. 1: 31. And God saw *every thing* that he had made, and behold it *was very good.*

[3] Gen. 2: 2. And on the seventh day God ended the work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

[4] And God *blessed* the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God created and made. v. 3.

proceeds from it? Or what does the grain of seed wheat know of the stalk, which grows out of it? Much less can the acorn be regarded as the creator of the oak; or the vegetable seeds, of the plants which God produces from them? Nor is the case different with animated beings. The hen is ignorant of the brood, which is to emanate from her eggs, at the term of her incubation. Nor is the process of generation less incomprehensible in beings of higher and rational nature; nor God any less the actual Creator of every individual. In the same sense, and in the same mediate manner, is God the real *preserver* of every thing that exists throughout the universe. It is God, reader, that preserves you every moment of your existence. Every breath you draw and every beating pulse that throbs at your heart proclaims to you the continued goodness and preserving care of your heavenly Father, and calls on you for gratitude in word and work. Reflect on the intricate machinery of which your body consists, on the numerous bones, the five hundred and twenty-seven muscles, the complicated glands, the tender nerves and innumerable blood vessels diffused throughout your body, all every moment liable to disorder, and well may you exclaim with the pious songster of Zion,

Our life contains a thousand springs,
And dies if one be gone;
Strange, that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long.

But *'tis our God supports our frame*,
The God that formed us first:
Salvation to th' Almighty name,
That reared us from the dust.

While we have breath, or life, or tongues,
Our Maker we'll adore;
His Spirit moves our heaving lungs,
Or they would breathe no more.

Of Angels.

I. The Scriptures teach us, that prior to the formation of man,[1] God created a numerous order of beings of higher rank, termed angels, by which are intended spirits possessed of intellectual and moral excellence superior to that of man,[2] employed by God as the ministers of his providence. They are also called morning stars, sons of God, cherubim, seraphim, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers;[3] and appear to be characterised by diversity of rank.[4]

Angels are engaged in serving[5] and worshipping God,[6] and ministering to them that shall be heirs of salvation.[7] Lazarus was borne by angels into Abraham's bosom;[8] angels conducted Peter,[9] and the apostles[10] out of prison; informed Paul that he should escape in the shipwreck;[11] appeared to Zechariah,[12]

[1] Job 38: 4. 7. Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth?—When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Matth. 26: 53. Dan. 7: 10.

[2] Psalm 103: 20. Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that *excel in strength,* that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. 2 Thess. 1: 7. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, not *even* the angels in heaven.

[3] Ezek. 10: 19. And the *cherubim* lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight. Is. 6: 2. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet: and with twain he did fly. Col. 1: 16. Heb. 1: 4. 6. Dan. 4: 17.

[4] 1 Thess. 4: 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

[5] Rom. 8: 38. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor *angels*, nor *principalities*, nor *powers*, nor things present, nor things to come, &c.

[6] Col. 1: 16. [7] Eph. 1: 21. 1 Pet. 3: 22.

[8] Luke 16: 22. [9] Acts 12: 7. [10] Acts 5: 19. 20.

[11] 27: 23. [12] Luke 1: 11.

and celebrated with demonstrations of celestial joy the glorious advent of the Saviour.[1] They are doubtless subject to the same moral code,[2] which regulates the human family, and constitute, like the latter, a part of the grand moral empire of Jehovah.

II. Yet some of these happy and holy spirits kept not their first estate;[3] but, at a time and in a manner unknown to us, like man transgressed the covenant. By this rebellion they forfeited their primitive innocence and happiness, were banished into the regions of despair, where they are now suffering, and reserved in everlasting chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day. These apostate spirits are by the sacred writers denominated devils, and one of their number, who is leader of the rest, is termed Satan, and sometimes Beelzebub, Dragon, &c.[4]

It cannot be doubted, that these evil spirits also exert an important and baneful influence on the human family. Satan tempted our first parents,[5] tempted the Saviour,[6] and tempted Judas[7] to betray his Master. In short he is emphatically styled "the tempter," and is represented as going about like a roaring

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[1] Luke 2: 9, &c.

[2] Matth. 4: 10. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth *as it is in heaven.*

[3] Jude v. 6. And the angels, who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. 2 Pet. 2: 4.

[4] Job 1: 12. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord. Rev. 12: 9. And the great Dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and satan, which deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Isaiah 14: 12. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations.

[5] Gen. 3. [6] Matth. 4: 3—12.

[7] John 13: 2. And supper being ended, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son to betray him).

lion, seeking whom he may devour.[1] It may be difficult in many cases to distinguish between the temptations of satan, and the suggestions of our own depraved nature. Nor is it essentially necessary, that we be able thus to discriminate, as the general precept of inspiration is alike applicable to sinful solicitations from whatever source they arise. "Resist the tempter and he will flee from you." The following observations however will in many cases enable us to distinguish the source of our temptations. a) When a person hopefully converted to God, is tempted to those actions which formerly constituted his besetting sins, the temptation is probably to be attributed to the relic of sinful propensity yet adhering to him. Every such reviving energy of native depravity, impairs his evidence of true piety; and unless he betake immediately to some holy employment of the mind, to prayer, reading or contemplating divine truth, he is in awful danger of becoming again the slave of sin, and gradually losing all sense of divine things from his soul. b) Temptations may be attributed to the same source, if the objects naturally calculated to excite them, be present, and we have incautiously been dallying with them. c) But these suggestions may be attributed to the influence of Satan, if we are tempted to perform acts which are contrary to our prevailing state of mind, nor coincident with former besetting sins, and to which we have given no occasion by sinful dalliance; as when a truly pious man, who never had been profane, is tempted to curse God: or when a true believer, who had never been inclined to infidelity, is, in the midst of prayer, tempted to doubt the existence of the Being to whom his supplications are addressed, as was on one occasion, that eminent man of God, Franke. d) They are probably attributable to the same source, when they contemplate actions contrary to our constitutional temperament or disposition; as when Peter, naturally of precipi-

[1] 1 Pet. 5: 8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

tate and intrepid character, was tempted through fear to deny his Lord.

Instances have occurred, in which persons of acknowledged piety, have been tempted to self-destruction. If they occur in a state of health and serenity of mind, they may result from satanic influence. But if, as is usually the case, the individual is of a melancholy temperament, they are the offspring of bodily and mental disease, and can be permanently remedied only by such medical prescriptions, as will restore their subjects to health. In all cases, where persons thus situated actually perform the mysterious deed, they must be regarded as having lost all self-control, and with it all responsibility for their actions.

In every instance it is the duty of man to withdraw his mind from any object of temptation, to shun the occasions where they occur, and by prayer and the other appointed means of grace to live near to God. Thus doing we have the pleasing assurance that our heavenly Father will not suffer us to be tempted above what we can bear, and that with the temptation he will always grant us grace equal to our day, and make a way to escape.[1]

The employment of angels by the providence of God, to minister to the heirs of salvation on earth, is a subject of pleasing reflection, and affords just scope for speculations of the most thrilling character as to the particular sainted relations or friends who may be hovering around us as messengers of heaven. Yet we should ever remember, that they act not independently; but as the implicit servants of God, and in strict accordance with divine command. Not unto them therefore ought either our confidence, or prayers, or adoration to be directed; but unto the one God, through Jesus Christ, whose servants angels are, and to whom alone we are indebted for every blessing, whether it be conveyed to us through angelic agency, or any other channel.

[1] 1 Cor. 10: 13.

That the invocation or the worship of angels is useless and sinful, appears evident. a) We have not the least assurance that the saints and angels ever know any thing about even the millionth part of the prayers idly addressed to them in different parts of the world. Like ourselves they are finite creatures, and for ought we know, can attend to no more than one individual at a time. Yet, what short of divine omniscience could make them acquainted with simultaneous prayers of more than a hundred millions of Roman Catholics at stated seasons? Either all these prayers except one or at most a few, must be thrown away, or the Romanists must regard the saints as omniscient, that is, must in effect deify them. And what better would this be than the polytheism of the ancient pagans?

b) He alone who *died* for us, can make intercession according to the sacred volume; for the atonement and intercession are there conjoined.[1]

c) He alone can be qualified to present our petitions successfully to God, who possesses power to cleanse them of their pollutions, to which neither angel nor archangel is competent.

d) The sacred volume puts this question to rest by the explicit declaration that there is but *one mediator* betwixt God and men, the man Christ Jesus.[2]

e) That the *worship of angels* in any sense, is highly criminal, we cannot doubt; for Paul expressly condemns it, and exhorts the Colossians not to suffer any one to beguile them into the worshipping of angels.[3]

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[1] Rom. 8: 34. Who is he that condemneth? It is *Christ that died*, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, *who also maketh intercession* for us.

[2] 1 Tim. 2: 5. 6. For there is one God, and Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified (published) in due time.

[3] Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility (some outward mode of expressing humility not enjoined by God,

f) The angel in the Revelation, expressly forbade John to worship him on the ground that angels are also fellow-servants of God, and that *God alone* is to be worshipped.[1]

g) Finally, it is one of the unchangeable precepts of the decalogue, binding on all men, and all nations and all ages of the world, that we should worship the Lord our God and serve him alone.[2]

It has been said that Abraham, Jacob, and Joshua worshipped angels, but without any ground: for they worshipped the Son of God, who had appeared to them. Abraham calls him Jehovah[3] (Lord), the judge of all the earth, and prays him for the safety of Sodom. That the angel with whom Jacob wrestled was the same uncreated being we learn from Hosea,[4] where he is said to have exhibited strength in conflict with God. And Joshua worshipped the same uncreated angel, for he terms him Captain of the Lord's hosts.[5] These passages therefore neither contradict the plain precepts above cited, nor afford any countenance to the species of idolatry, termed worship of angels.

The Origin and Primitive State of Man.

To man, a being possessed of such exalted faculties, capable of acquiring knowledge, and naturally thirsting for its acquisition, few questions can possess greater interest than that concern-

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but prescribed by the will of man), and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

[1] Rev. 22: 8. 9. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to *worship before the feet of the angel*, which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: WORSHIP GOD. See ch. 19: 20.

[2] Matt 4: 10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Deut 6: 13. 10: 20. 1 Samuel 7: 3. Exod 20: 3.

[3] Gen. 18. [4] 12: 3. [5] Josh. 5: 14. 15.

ing his own *origin*. If he applies to reason for instruction, he receives nothing but vague unsatisfactory conjecture in reply. We can trace our lineage back for several generations by the aid of tradition, and if we consult written records of profane historians we can trace back the human family to a great deluge, the time of which they very indefinitely fix. The great body of profane histories, long before they reach so great an antiquity, have degenerated to mere *mythological fiction*. In the word of God alone do we find an authentic account of this matter; and although there are some things remarkable and to us inexplicable contained in it, no other less objectionable can possibly be conceived or has ever been suggested by the imagination of man.

The Scriptures inform us, that on the sixth[1] day of the creative week, about 4000 years before the birth of the Saviour, after God had created the earth and all the other things on it, he made man out of the dust of the earth, a being possessed of soul and body,[2] placed him in the garden of Eden,[3] and gave him dominion over all the other living things on earth.[4]

Our first parents, when they proceeded from the hand of their Creator, were endowed with superior physical, intellectual and moral excellencies; and are therefore said to have been created in the image of their Maker.[5] Being free from the

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[1] Gen. 1: 26. 31.

[2] Gen. 2: 7. And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul.

[3] Gen. 2: 15. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it.

[4] Gen. 1: 28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

[5] Gen. 1: 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

seeds and effects of disease, their bodies were doubtless much superior in strength, symmetry and beauty to those of the present generations after the havoc made in the human constitution[1] by near 6000 years of effeminacy, luxury and excess. We know too, that although their bodies were probably corruptible in their nature, God had given them means for the perpetual preservation of life, and would in all probability not have withdrawn them if they had not sinned.[2] Yea, might not these bodies perhaps have been gradually elevated into spiritual (glorified, *πνευματικα*) bodies, and, without being subjected to death, have ultimately been transferred to heaven? His intellectual powers also, were doubtless superior, for it is a subject of daily experience, that disease and a course of wickedness impair the energies of the mind, no less than of the body.[3] And, whatever *rationale* may be adopted of the fact, or whatever different opinions may be adopted of the seat and precise nature of the evil, no believer in Scripture can doubt that the moral abilities of man have been radically affected by the fall, that in his primitive state he possessed in a much higher degree, both the ability and disposition to do the will of his heavenly Father. For we are expressly told, that when we are "renewed in the spirit of our minds, we put on the new man, which after (in the likeness of) God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."[4]

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[1] Gen. 47: 9. Jacob said unto Pharaoh, the days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and had not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. Psalm 55: 23. Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.

[2] Gen. 3: 22. And now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever.

[3] Col. 3: 10. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in *knowledge* after the *image* of him that created him.

[4] Ephes. 4: 23. 24.

Our first parents were moreover placed under a moral government, that is, in a state of probation, under a law just in its nature, salutary in its tendency, having the promise of the continued favour of God if they remained faithful, and the menace of death if they transgressed. This law was none other than the moral law afterwards republished from Sinai, together with a few positive precepts more specifically discussed under the next article. The obedience required was entire, spiritual, perpetual, and perfect,[1] for less than this God could not consistently require.

It has been objected to the scripture account of the origin of the human race, that the deduction of all nations from our first parents, or from the family of Noah is inconsistent with the great diversity of complexion between the Africans and us. To this, however, we reply, that had we no other evidence in the case, the connexion between climate and complexion is sufficiently attested by the fact, which even the infidel Buffon acknowledges, that "man is *white* in Europe, *black* in Africa, *yellow* in Asia, and *red* in America: where the heat is excessive, as in Guinea and Senegal, the people are perfectly *black*; where less excessive, as in Abyssinia, the people are *less black*; where it is more temperate, as in Barbary and Arabia, they are *brown*; and where mild, as in Europe, and in lesser Asia, they are *fair*." But there is another still stronger fact in existence which seems to leave no room for doubt. In Cochin, on the Malabar coast, there is a colony of Jews originally from Palestine, and therefore fair; but at present they are as black as the other Malabarians, who are almost as black as the inhabitants of Guinea. Yet these Jews have not intermarried, but remained a separate people during the several centuries of their res-

[1] Gal. 3: 10. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

idence in that country. Again, the Portuguese who settled at Ceylon a few centuries since, have become blacker than the natives: and the Portuguese, who settled near the Mandingoes three centuries ago, have become so black as to be called *negroes*, which they however resent as an indignity. Nor does the curly hair of the negro present any difficulty. It results from the extreme heat and dryness of the air, and Europeans have found a partial effect of this kind in themselves during a short residence under the vertical rays of the torrid sun. M. De Pagés, between 1767—1771 says "My own hair became more dry and delicate than usual, and receiving little nourishment from a checked perspiration, showed a disposition to assume the same frizzled and woolly appearance—and my complexion at length differed little from that of a Hindoo or Arab.[1] It is probable, that one or more thousand years are requisite, before the entire influence of climate, local peculiarities, food, air, water &c. is exerted: and as long a residence of the African in a different climate may elapse before every vestige of his peculiarities is effaced. The fact therefore that the second and third generation of Africans among us exhibit only a slight approximation to the complexion of our climate proves nothing. In five or ten centuries we have no doubt the African would become entirely white among us. It is thus evident that experience fully sustains the declaration of Moses and Paul, that all the nations of the earth are descended of one blood.[2]

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[1] Dr. Eveleigh's Rampton Lectures, pp. 276. 292.

[2] Acts 17: 26. And hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation.

ARTICLE II.

OF NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

Our churches likewise teach, that since the fall of Adam, all men who are naturally engendered, are born with a depraved nature, that is, without the fear of God or confidence towards him, but with sinful propensities: and that this disease, or natural depravity, is really sin, and still condemns and causes eternal death to those, who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit.

The Lutheran church has always regarded the doctrine of natural depravity, as a primary article of the Chrstian System. Nor can it with propriety be viewed in any other light, as it is the only certain basis for our belief in the necessity of a Saviour, and of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine is, moreover, so frequently and forcibly inculcated in the word of God, that no man ought to profess to be a believer in the scriptures, who denies its truth.[1]

[1] Gen. 8: 21. For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. Gen. 6: 5. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Rom. 3: 9—12. There is none righteous, no, not one—there is none that understandeth, that seeketh after God—there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Eccles. 7: 20. For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.

I. *The origin of human depravity.*

Reason can indeed teach us the fact of our depravity,[1] but sheds not a solitary ray of light on its origin. The only rational solution of the introduction of evil into the world, is contained in the sacred volume.[2]

From this we learn, a) that *Satan*, assuming the form of a serpent, tempted our first parents to eat of the forbidden fruit. b) That yielding to this temptation, they voluntarily transgressed the law, which they knew had been appointed of God as the test of their obedience to him, the author of their being, their constant benefactor and moral governor. This law they might have fulfilled with the utmost facility, and the awful consequences of disobedience had been distinctly pourtrayed to them by God himself. c) That when they had transgressed, God inflicted on them the threatened penalty.

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[1] Gen. 3: 1—6. Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

[2] John 3: 8. He that committeth sin, is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. Rom. 5: 12. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, &c

II. *Its Nature.*

As to the exact nature of this innate depravity, and the propriety of the terms by which it has often been designated, various opinions have been and may be entertained. The earlier Christian fathers confined their attention to the reality and origin of this depravity. But St. Augustine felt the necessity of ascertaining something concerning its nature, which he believed to consist in *concupiscence*, in "the flesh lusting against the spirit." Others defined it as consisting in the want of that moral excellence, which constituted the image of God in man prior to the fall. The Augsburg Confession seems to combine both these views, and the great body of Lutheran divines has regarded natural, or original, or innate depravity, as *that disorder in the mental and bodily constitution of man, which was introduced by the fall of Adam,*[1] *is transmitted by natural generation*[2] *from parent to child, and the result of which is, that all men who are naturally engendered, evince in their action want of holiness, and a predisposition to sin.*[3]

Whether this natural depravity is originally of equal strength in all men, is a question on which different opinions have been entertained. That it is total, that is, extends to all our powers, is certain. The phrase, original sin has, by some writers, been used to signify not only our natural depravity, but also that individual act of transgression, by which our first parents apostatized from God; but as the two are evidently distinct, they ought to be designated by different names.

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[1] Rom. 5: 12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, &c.

[2] John 3: 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

[3] See the texts of Note I. of previous page.

III. *The Consequences of natural depravity.*

On this important subject, the language of the Confession is somewhat indistinct. The first signification, which the words admit, is, that the natural depravity, with which we are born, is prior to all voluntary action by us, charged to us as guilt, and itself entails endless perdition on all who are not delivered from the curse by true conversion. Those of our earlier divines who embraced this view of the subject, always used the phrase original sin to signify not only our native disposition to sin, but also the original act of apostasy by our first parents. They did not suppose, that we are punished for the mere fact of being born with sinful propensities; but considering Adam as the federal head of the whole human family, believed that by virtue of some covenant relation to him, the guilt of his personal voluntary act was imputed to his posterity, and thus involved them all in the curse of temporal and eternal death.

The *second* interpretation, which the latter clause of this Article admits is, that "this disease or natural disorder of our bodily and mental constitution, is really contrary to the will of God, and still becomes the *occasion* of eternal death to all who voluntarily indulge in these sinful propensities, and do not avail themselves of those means of grace by which the Holy Spirit regenerates the soul. The confession mentions only one of these means, namely, baptism, but it is evident that its authors did not intend to designate this as the only means of grace, for the German copy of it, published by Melancthon himself in 1533, reads thus; "who are not regenerated by baptism and faith in Christ, through the *gospel* and Holy Spirit."[1] From this it is also evident, that Melancthon, who, as is well known, penned the

[1] See the excellent recent work of Dr. Funk, in Lubec. "The Aug. Confession according to the principal edition of Melancthon himself, with the various readings of other editions." p. 6.

Confession, had reference to adults in the clause "condemneth those who are not born again," because infants are incapable either of reading or understanding "the gospel." The advocates of this view do not believe, that the progenitor of the human race did or could sustain any such relation to his posterity, as would render just a literal imputation[1] of the *guilt* of his sins to them. The Lutheran church regards either of these opinions as consistent with the belief of the general doctrine of natural depravity, though her divines, at present, very generally embrace the latter.[2]

Our own views on this disputed subject, may be summed up in the following features:

1. All mankind, in consequence of their descent from fallen Adam, are born with a depraved nature, that is, their bodily and mental system is so disordered, as in the result of its operation to evince a predisposition to sin.

2. This natural depravity disqualifies its subjects for heaven. Because the action of depraved (disordered) faculties and powers, would not even in heaven itself, be conformed to the divine law, and could not be acceptable to God. In our natural state, moreover, we have not the qualifications requisite for the enjoyment of heaven, having no spiritual appetites. But we cannot suppose, that God would condemn us to positive and eternal misery, merely on account of this depraved (disordered) nature;[3] for we are in no sense the authors or causes of it;

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[1] Ezek. 18: 2. 3. 20. Deut. 24: 16. Hos. 13: 9.

[2] On this subject, our divines therefore agree substantially with the great body of New England theologians, and with such ministers of the Presbyterian church, as have rejected the doctrine of literal imputation in the old sense of the term.

[3] Ezekiel 18: 20. The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son *shall not* bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. See the whole chapter. Deut. 24: 16. The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, *neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers*; every man shall be put to death for *his own* sin.

and a just God will not punish his creatures for acts which they did not perform. Children, therefore, who die in their infancy, having never merited punishment by personal guilt, will indubitably not be consigned to perdition. Moreover as the atonement which the Saviour made, embraces the whole world, it must also include children, who are a part of it; and as that atonement not only delivered its subjects from punishment, but also purchased for them a title to heaven; it follows, that children, having not lost their title by voluntary unbelief, will for Christ's sake enjoy the benefit of it, that is, that at death their corruptible nature shall be transformed into an incorruptible, and their mortal into an immortal one, and they, liberated from their moral disease, be ushered into the blissful presence of him, who said "suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

3. Strongly tempted by the solicitations of this depraved nature, which are however not irresistible, all men do, when they reach the years of moral agency, voluntarily indulge more or less in known sin, and thus, contracting personal guilt, expose themselves to the just displeasure of an offended God.

4. All actual or real sin, consists in voluntary actions and their consequences, viz.

a) *Deliberate, voluntary transgressions of the divine law.*

b) *Acts performed from mere habit, without design or premeditation.* As these habits are formed by individual, voluntary acts; they are properly the result of our voluntary agency, and justly chargeable to us. Hence, every profane word, every falsehood uttered by the habitual swearer and liar, and every lascivious thought of the sensualist, though they occurred spontaneously, from mere habit, without design, and often almost without the persons being conscious of the fact, are nevertheless actual sins, and justly expose the transgressor to the penalty of the divine law.

c) *The state of our feelings or affections on moral subjects,*

so far as it is the result of our voluntary and habitual transgressions, in like manner involves us in condemnation. Every penitent sinner, and every enlightened believer, must deplore as his own personal guilt the insensibility of his heart, the instability of his affections. We do not mean, that our feelings are under the instantaneous control of volition. The contrary is evidently the fact. No careless sinner can by a mere act of his will, excite feelings of penitence for sin. And it is, to say the least, useless for ministers to exhort him to do so. His intellectual views must first be corrected. He must be persuaded attentively to reflect on the character and law of God, on his own character and real interests, on the offers of pardon through a crucified Redeemer, and as he sincerely embraces correct views on these subjects, the correspondent, appropriate feelings will be excited in his mind. And the state of his religious affections throughout life, is dependent on the general course of conduct which he is pursuing, that is, on his voluntary actions, including the faithful use of those means of grace, through which the Holy Spirit operates on the soul.

d) *We are guilty on account of the erroneous or inadequate views which we adopt on the subject of religion.* Without entering into a discussion of the several sources of errors in religious opinion, we remark, that they arise, in general, from voluntary neglect or abuse of the means of information, which God has vouchsafed us; and, so far as this is the case, are justly laid to our charge. According to the laws of our nature, these views are constantly recurring to the mind, and exert an important influence on our conduct and feelings. And finally, the load of our guilt is augmented still more,

e) *By our omitting to attain the highest degree of holiness and usefulness, which was within our reach*, by a constant and faithful use of all the means of knowledge and of grace, which God in his providence extended to us. And now, when we reflect on the vast extent of criminality, attached to our

voluntary actions, and the baneful consequences resulting from them, is it not evident that the guilt of every unconverted sinner is alarmingly great! Has not even the believer daily much reason for humiliation, on account of his want of greater zeal and more extended usefulness? Must he not exclaim with the psalmist: "Cast me not away from thy presence, O Lord! and take not thy Holy Spirit from me?" whilst he acknowledges the blood of Christ as the only ground of his justification, and unites with the redeemed in heaven in ascribing "blessing and honour and glory and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

ARTICLE III.

OF THE SON OF GOD (AND HIS MEDIATORIAL WORK).

They likewise teach, that the Word, that is the Son of God, assumed human nature, in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary, so that the two natures, human and divine, inseparably united in one person, constitute one Christ, who is true God and man, born of the virgin Mary; who truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried, that he might reconcile the Father to us, and be a sacrifice not only for original sin, but also for all the actual sins of men. He likewise descended into hell, and truly arose on

the third day; and then ascended to heaven, that he might sit at the right hand of the father, might perpetually reign over all creatures, and might sanctify those who believe in him, by sending into their hearts the Holy Spirit who governs, consoles, quickens and defends them against the devil and the power of sin. The same Christ will return again openly, that he may judge the living and the dead, &c. according to the Apostolic creed.

ARTICLE IV.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

They in like manner teach, that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works; but that they are justified gratuitously for Christ's sake, through faith; when they believe, that they are received into favour, and that their sins are remitted on account of Christ, who made satisfaction for our transgressions by his death. This faith God imputes to us as righteousness.

I. *General remarks.*

The third article describes the mediatorial work of the Redeemer in a historical manner, by enumerating the several oc-

currences embraced in it. It teaches us the incarnation of the Son of God, the union of the two natures of the Saviour in one person, his sufferings and death, his descent to the world of Spirits, his resurrection and ascension, and the mission of the Holy Spirit. These incidents constitute that glorious display of redeeming love, which the angels of heaven beheld with amazement, which now fills the heart of every christian with gratitude and his lips with praises, and in the realms of celestial bliss will be the theme of his song throughout the revolving ages of eternity. The fourth article expresses the relation to the law of God, sustained by the returning sinner, at a certain stage of his preparation for heaven. It therefore relates to a part of the third article, and may more advantageously be discussed in connexion with it.

This glorious work of divine benevolence is the only ground on which salvation is offered to any individual of the human family. It is the foundation of the whole plan of salvation taught in the word of God, and has been the subject of much attention, as well as the theme of much discussion. It is doubtless desirable to every reflecting Christian to have some definite views of that scheme of mercy, to which he owes his happiness both in time and eternity. Nay, does it not betray a stupidity of soul unbecoming our rational nature, to be indifferent on a subject, into which angels desired to look, and which constitutes the science and the song of heaven?

II. *The Plan of Salvation through Christ.*

In describing the mediatorial work, the sacred volume employs three kinds of terms; first specific, literal descriptions of the individual acts of the Saviour, such as his birth, teaching, miracles, sufferings, death, &c: Secondly, abstract terms more or less general in their nature and expressing also the influence of these

merits on the relations of man to the divine law, as atonement, reconciliation, propitiation, redemption, &c.; and thirdly, figurative language more or less general, such as, giving liberty to the captive, opening the prison to them that were bound, bruising the serpent's head, &c. Different Christian writers, in endeavouring to simplify and systematize their ideas on this subject, have pursued various methods; some preferring one, and others another of the above terms, to designate the whole work; some regarding several of them as synonymous, and others attributing a peculiar signification to each. Whilst a large portion of divines has divided the entire work of the Redeemer into the three offices of priest, of prophet, and of king. This singular want of uniformity could not fail to envelope the subject in much confusion, and renders some observations on it the more necessary in this place.

In order, then, to obtain clear views of the merits of the Saviour, which constitute a cardinal feature in the Scripture plan of salvation, it will be necessary to take a glance at that entire plan itself, in its various relations and circumstances. When we examine the sacred volume, we find that two entirely different methods of obtaining salvation, have been prescribed by God to man. The one existed in his state of original innocence, and the other in his depraved condition after the fall. The former is usually termed the covenant of works, the latter the covenant of grace.

The Covenant of works, or plan of salvation prior to the fall.

The Scriptures contain but little information on the specific circumstances of Adam, prior to the fall. It is evident, however, that the situation and relations of man in his primitive innocence, were those of a perfect moral government. Its features were the following:

a) *The law under which he was placed was just, and salutary in itself.* This was the moral law, together with some

positive injunctions, such as, to exercise dominion over the different animals,[1] to observe the sabbath,[2] to till the garden of Eden,[3] and not to eat of the forbidden fruit.[4]

b) *Suitable sanctions were attached to this law*, viz. life, as the reward of obedience, and death, as the punishment of transgression.

c) *The Lawgiver was an authorized one*, God himself.

d) *The subjects of this government had sufficient knowledge of the law, and every requisite ability to fulfill it.*

As the provision for a pardoning power in human governments, is confessedly based on their imperfection, on the belief that their punishments cannot be exactly apportioned to every shade of guilt, and on the possibility, in some instances, that a person convicted may still be innocent; such a provision, tending so directly to multiply crimes and destroy the influence of the law could not belong to the perfect government of an omniscient God. If the exercise of this power is the prolific source of incalculable evils in governments including only a few millions of subjects; its effects would be inconceivable in the moral government of God, which embraces not only the family of man, but also the countless hosts of heaven, and thousands of other worlds. Of this entire universe God is the moral governor, and as such under a natural obligation, to sustain the influence of his laws for the welfare of his creatures. The penalty of its violation must therefore inevitably have fallen on our first parents, if the God of mercy had not made some ex-

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[1] Gen 1: 28. And God blessed them and said—have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

[2] Gen. 2: 3. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it &c.

[3] Gen 2: 15. And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress (till) it and to keep it.

[4] Gen. 2: 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

traordinary provision to sustain the honour of his law, and deeply to impress upon his rational subjects the important truth, that though in this case the penalty was remitted, their moral governor would not suffer his laws to be transgressed with impunity. Nor could the offspring of these parents have expected a better lot, under the covenant of works, after the fall. We are not only born with a disordered nature, and thus disqualified for communion with the perfect inhabitants of heaven; but we have all likewise become voluntary transgressors of the divine law, and are therefore justly liable to its penalty on account of our own personal guilt. By the deeds of the law, we are expressly told, no flesh can be justified.[1] The whole human family would therefore necessarily have been involved in ruin, if the Father of mercies had not graciously provided a method of escape, Such a provision he did make, and its features constitute what is termed

The Covenant of Grace,

Or plan of salvation since the fall. Its substance, as explained by the Saviour himself is, that "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"[2] All that the scriptures teach, or reason suggests, on this important topic, may for the sake of perspicuity, be reduced to the following four heads:

1. *The basis of this covenant*, which is the work of Christ, usually termed the atonement;

2. *The persons placed under it*;

3. *The manner in which the atonement changes their relations to God and his law* (the modus operandi of the atonement.,

4. *The part which we are required to perform*, or the *con-*

[1] Rom. 3: 20. [2] John 3: 16.

ditions, on which the benefits of this covenant are bestowed on us.

1. The *basis* of this covenant, the ground on which salvation is bestowed on men, is nothing else than the merits of the incarnate Son of God, Jesus, the Christ. By the merits of the Saviour we mean not any particular part of them, such as his death; but the whole of what he did and suffered in accomplishing the work, which brought him from the throne of heaven, until he himself upon the cross proclaimed, "it is finished." His subsequent actions on earth, as well as his present agency in heaven, belong either to the publication of the finished work, or to its application to men. Nor do the merits of Christ merely become the mediate ground of our reconciliation with God, by leading us to repentance, and to such a moral reformation as renders us more pleasing to God, and induces him to pardon our transgressions. On the contrary, evangelical repentance is based on this display of the divine benevolence, it presupposes this pardon as already provided for us, and consists of sorrow for our ingratitude and rebellion against so good a "God, who commended his love towards us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us."[1] The whole tenour of the sacred volume expressly inculcates the doctrine, that it was neither our repentance, nor faith, nor any thing else which we can do, but Christ who "reconciled us"[2] to God, who "made a propitiation for our sins,"[3] and "provided a ransom for all."[4]

2. *The persons whom God placed under this covenant of grace*, are those who in consequence of Adam's fall, are born with a depraved nature, and therefore cannot be saved by the deeds of the law, under the covenant of works.

a) This is evident from numerous, explicit passages of the sacred volume. The apostle Paul informs us, that the gracious

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[1] Rom. 5: 8.
[2] 2 Cor. 5: 18. 19.
[3] 1 John. 2: 2. 4: 10.
[4] 1 Tim. 2: 6.

gift of salvation, is coextensive with the consequences of the fall. "Therefore, says he, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came *upon all men* unto justification of life."[1] Speaking to Timothy, he declares that God, our Saviour, "will have *all men* to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth,"[2] that "the living God is the Saviour of *all men*."[3] To the Corinthians he writes "that Christ *died for all*,"[4] and "that God through Christ, reconciled *the world* unto himself;"[5] to Titus[6] "that the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to (been evinced in behalf of) *all men*;" and to the Hebrews,[7] that "Jesus tasted death *for every man*." The Apostle John informs us, that "he is the propitiation for our sins, *and not for ours only*, but for the sins of the *whole world*."[8]

Nor are the persons who lived prior to the incarnation of the Saviour, excluded from the number of those placed under the covenant of grace. This is clearly taught in the sacred volume. Peter informs us, that there is salvation in no other, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."[9] And, again, "to him (to Christ) give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins."[10] Hence, either all the ancient fathers, including the prophets themselves, were lost, or they were saved, as Peter expressly tells us, "through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."[11]

b) The universality of the atonement is evident from the fact, clearly taught in scripture, that *Christ died also for those who are lost*. The advocates of limited atonement maintain,

[1] Rom. 5: 18. [2] 1 Tim. 2: 3—6. [3] 1 Tim. 4: 10.
[4] 2 Cor. 5: 15: [5] 2 Cor. 5: 19. [6] Tit. 2: 11.
[7] Heb. 2: 9. [8] 1 John 2: 2. [9] Acts 4: 12.
[10] Acts 10: 43. [11] Acts 15: 11.

that he died exclusively for the elect; and admit that if he died for one of those who are lost, he died for all mankind. This we think the annexed passages indisputably teach.[1]

c) It is evident from the fact, that the Saviour commanded the glad tidings of the salvation purchased by him, *to be preached to all.*[2] Now, it cannot well be supposed, that the Saviour would enjoin it on his disciples to offer salvation to those for whom none was provided. Could it be regarded in any other light than deception, and can any plausible evidence be assigned of the necessity or benefit of such duplicity in the church and kingdom of the Messiah?

d) That the provision for the salvation of men extends to the whole human family, is evident from the *divine will* on this subject, as taught in scripture. God is represented as, "not *willing* that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance."[3]

e) Finally; the same truth is clearly implied in all such

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[1] 2 Peter 2: 1. But there were false prophets also among the people,—who privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that *bought them*, and bring upon themselves *swift destruction.* Rom. 14: 15. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. 1 Cor. 8: 11. And through thy knowledge, shall the weaker brother *perish, for whom Christ died?* Heb. 10: 29. Heb. 6: 4. 5. 6.

[2] Mark 16: 15. 16. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel (the glad tidings of salvation) *to every creature.* Acts 17: 30. And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth *all men every where* to repent. Isaiah 55: 1. Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; &c. 45: 22. Look unto me and be *ye* saved, *all the ends of the earth.* 1 Tim. 2: 4. God will have all men to *come to a knowledge of the truth.*

[3] 2 Pet. 3: 9. 1 Tim. 2: 4. *God will have all men to be saved,* &c. Ezek. 18: 32. For I have *no pleasure in the death of him that dieth,* saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live. 33: 11. Say unto them: As I live, saith the Lord God, *I have no pleasure* in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn, ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Matth. 23: 37. O Jerusalem, &c.

passages as describe the *guilt* of those who believe not in the Saviour, and represent their *unbelief* as the *cause* of their damnation.[1] For how could men be guilty for not receiving Christ as their Redeemer, if he never did make an atonement for them? In not believing him their Saviour, they would believe the truth: and had they obeyed the advice of the ambassadors of Christ, and believed him their Redeemer, they would have yielded their faith to a falsehood.

Nor is the position that this provision of mercy was made for all mankind at all inconsistent with the fact, that the scriptures sometimes speak distinctively of the people of God. Because, those who accept the offers of mercy and become the obedient subjects of our heavenly king, whilst the great mass of mankind reject them, and persevere in their rebellion, may with undoubted propriety be styled emphatically "the people of God," his choice or chosen, his select or elect people.

3. *The manner in which*, and the degree to which, the merits of Christ change our relations to God and his law, have been variously viewed by different persons (the modus operandi of the atonement.)

a) The first view is that which confines the work of Christ chiefly to his sufferings, and regards them as a governmental transaction, as an abstract display of the divine indignation at sin, in order to prevent the law from being dishonoured, although its penalties should not be inflicted on all transgressors.

This system regards man, as by nature (morally) incapable of attaining salvation, without the special influence of God, and maintains that this special influence is denied to all except a certain number, whom God determined infallibly to save. This is, in substance, the view usually denominated Hopkinsian: although it constituted but a small part of the doctrinal

[1] Go ye and preach the gospel (glad tidings of a Saviour) to every (rational) creature; he that *believeth not* shall be damned. Mark 16: 15. 16. John 3: 18. 36. 8: 48.

peculiarities designated by that term, and is received by many who reject its other concomitants.

b) The work of Christ has been regarded by some, as an actual vicarious endurance of all the punishment, which would have been inflicted throughout eternity on a certain *portion* of the human family, whom, they supposed, God had determined infallibly to save, and as the price of their actual and infallible salvation. This system admits that all men are by nature (morally) incapable of attaining salvation without a special influence of God, and maintains that this special influence is withheld from all except this select portion. This is what, with various modifications, is termed the old Calvinistic view of the atonement.

c) Others regard the work of Christ, as the actual vicarious payment of the penal debt, and purchase of the title to heaven, for all the members of the human family, to be offered to them on conditions made possible by divine grace, to all who hear the gospel. Or by a slight modification of the same view,

The work of Christ may be regarded as *the vicarious endurance of incalculable suffering and the exhibition of perfect righteousness, by which full atonement was made and salvation purchased for the whole world, to be offered to them on conditions made possible by divine grace to all who hear the gospel.* This may properly be termed the *Lutheran* view of the atonement.

The only difference between the two aspects of this view relates to the duration, kind, and relations of the Saviour's sufferings. They were not the same as those of the sinner would have been in duration; for they were not eternal: nor in kind, for the Son of God suffered no remorse of conscience, was tormented by no sense of personal guilt: nor could the atonement be the literal payment of the debt; else when once discharged by the Saviour, the sinner might by right claim exemption from punishment and admission to heaven, regardless of his moral

qualifications, for a debt once paid cannot again be demanded. Moreover, crime is a personal act, and cannot like a pecuniary debt, be transferred or literally imputed to another.

This system (the Lutheran) regards man as incapable of the conditions of salvation prescribed in the gospel (repentance and faith) without the gracious aid of God; but maintains, that this necessary aid consists in means of grace and invariably accompanying influences of the Holy Spirit, for the sincere (not perfect) use of which all men possess the entire ability (physical and intellectual) and the sincere and persevering use of which is always, sooner or later, made effectual to the accomplishment of the above conditions of salvation.

By "sincere" use is here not meant a perfect use, but a volition (and consequent effort) to use the means of grace aright, made in view of the proper motive. The difference between a sincere and a perfect performance of an act is not only obvious to the common sense of all mankind, but also taught in the sacred volume. No mortal, not even the most advanced Christian, can *perfectly* fulfil the requisitions of the all-perfect law of God. The degree of perfection attending our efforts at duty will generally be proportionate to our advancement in the Christian life. But however various be the degree of success attending the effort, all true Christians make it *sincerely*. But not only can every true Christian act with sincerity in this matter; every truly penitent and awakened sinner can resolve sincerely, that is, in view of the proper motive, to seek the Lord; nay, even every careless sinner in a land of gospel light, possesses at all times the power to reflect on the evidences of his obligation to serve God, and in view of them, that is, in view of the proper motive, that is, *sincerely*, to resolve to seek his forsaken God. His efforts at first will be exceedingly imperfect, nay it may be impossible for him even to continue thinking of God any length of time, without being led off by his inveterate habits of attention to different objects; yet is the divine blessing promised even

to the most feeble attempt. And *every sincere effort of the unregenerate, to perform any duty, is doubtless pleasing to God.* The contrary supposition involves the absurdity, that an unregenerate sinner must first be an advanced Christian, or at least truly converted, before he can begin to seek the Lord acceptably. What parent does not applaud the sincere efforts of his child to accomplish the task assigned him, however imperfect the success with which those efforts are crowned? The scriptures no where teach, that the prayers of the *returning* sinner are an abomination in the sight of God; but the passage so often misrepresented, evidently and expressly refers to such sinners as are deliberately continuing in a course of transgression.[1] Do the scriptures announce to us displeasure on the part of God at the resolution of the returning prodigal, "I will arise and return to my father's house?" or do the doctrines of Christianity imply, that he ought to have undertaken the execution of this happy purpose in his own strength without addressing the mercy seat of heaven for gracious aid? Does not an inspired apostle say "If any man *lack* wisdom (not having already attained it) let him ask of God who giveth liberally unto *all* men (and consequently also to returning prodigals as well as to professing Christians,) and upbraideth not?" "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and grace to help in every time of need?"[2]

By "entire ability" in the above delineation of the sinner's state, is meant every thing that is necessary to bring an action fairly within the range of our voluntary agency, within our *power of choice.* To suppose the volitions of men to perform their duty mechanically or rather constitutionally, impeded by a cer-

[1] Prov. 28: 9. He that *turneth away his ear* from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination. Of the same import also is Prov. 15: 8.

[2] Heb. 4: 16. See also Matt. 7: 11. and 7: 7.

tain indefinite innate something within, misnamed moral inability, which the sinner cannot overcome, and which the Deity must first remove before a right volition can take place; is to suppose all men born in a state in which they must necessarily sin on, until God removes from their hearts this insuperable barrier to holiness. What is it else than a delusive idea enveloped in misapplied terms? What else than to say that man has ability to do his duty, and yet has it not? Certainly the term inability cannot with propriety be applied to any thing in the sinner, which it is in his power to remove; nor can there be any more propriety in predicating ability of any one, whose volitions are impeded by an innate impediment which he cannot surmount, either by his own strength, or by the help of gracious aid, which is actually offered to him and which he has power to accept.

4. *The part which it is required of us to perform, or the conditions on which the benefits of this covenant are applied to us.*

These conditions have been somewhat various in different ages, according as the features of this covenant have been more or less clearly revealed. There have usually been four gradations acknowledged in the successive publication of this covenant which have been termed economies:

The *Adamic*, the *Abrahamic*, the *Mosaic*, and finally, the *Christian* as fully developed by our Lord and his inspired servants, and recorded for the use of future generations in the New Testament. In each of these economies, the condition of salvation was in substance, faithful obedience to the light enjoyed. It is unnecessary to enter into a discussion of any but the last. Before the advent of Christ, the children of God exercised faith, more or less definite, in the Messiah to come. Under the last economy, in which we live, the conditions are *repentance*,[1] and

[1] Mark 1: 15. Repent ye, and believe the gospel. Luke 13: 3. Except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise perish.

faith in Jesus Christ. These conditions may indeed be reduced to one, namely faith;[1] because this by its very nature presupposes repentance. Accordingly the Scriptures often mention faith alone; "We are justified by faith," says the apostle Paul to the Romans.

Whenever any individual performs these conditions, on which the blessings of the covenant of grace are bestowed, he is represented by the word of God as being in a state of

III. *Justification,*

that is, he is no longer under the curse of God's law, but is regarded by the moral governor and judge as an heir of heaven, and as entitled to all the blessings necessary for his preservation and growth in grace. The nature of justification is, therefore, easily understood.

Justification is that judicial act of God, by which the believing sinner is declared to be entitled to the benefits of the Saviour's merits. Or more amply defined, *Justification is that judicial act of God, by which, a believing sinner in consideration of the merits of Christ, is released from the penalty of the law, and is declared to be entitled to heaven.*

a) The source of our justification is the benevolence or grace of God.

b) The ground of this justification of the sinner is not his own works, but is none other than the above mentioned basis of the covenant of grace, the merits of Christ.[2]

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[1] Acts 16: 31. *Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

[2] Rom. 3: 21. 22. 28. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference.—Therefore we conclude that a man is *justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.* Rom. 4: 3. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed

c) The subjects of this act, are all those sinners, who have a living faith in the Saviour of men.[1] This doctrine the Reformers considered of cardinal importance, and Luther called it the articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesia, the article with which the church must stand or fall.

d) The import of this justification, is not only remission of all the punishment due to our sins, but also a right to eternal life,[2] and all the gracious aid necessary to its attainment.

e) The evidences of justification are and can be none other than the evidences of a true and living faith, namely good works,[3] and a life of evangelical obedience. If you have sincerely mourned over your sins, if you have felt your inability to save yourself, if you sincerely love and have cordially embraced the plan of salvation through a crucified Saviour, if whilst you are devoting your soul and body as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to his service, you nevertheless feel the imperfection of your best works, and habitually rely for heaven solely on a Saviour's blood; then, reader, may you joyfully indulge the hope, that you are justified by faith, are a child of God, and an heir of heaven! O glorious hope!

No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope or worldly fear,

God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. John 3: 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.

[1] Rom. 3: 28. sup.

[2] Rom. 5: 1. 2. Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace with God*, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and *rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

[3] James 2: 20. 21. 23. But wilt thou know, O vain man! that (mere speculative) faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son on the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

But oh! when both shall end,
Where shall I find my destined place?
Shall I my everlasting days
With fiends or angels spend?

Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how I may escape that death
Which never, never dies!
How make my own election sure;
And when I fail on earth, secure
A mansion in the skies.

f) This justification takes place at the moment when the sinner first attains a living faith in the Redeemer.

g) And, finally, from this state of justification the believer cannot fall,[1] save by deliberate and wilful abandonment of the path of christian duty. This is another glorious feature of the gospel scheme of salvation. Notwithstanding the numberless frailties and infirmities, which mingle with our best services, the Lord will not cast us off. Though we are surrounded by temptations and trials, which constitute necessary ingredients in our state of probation; yet shall we not be tempted above our strength, yet shall nothing, neither tribulation nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor the sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. In short, nothing can eject us from a state of justification, but a deliberate, wilful act of our own, by which we renounce our allegiance to the Saviour, and are no longer willing to accept mercy on the terms of the gospel.[2]

[1] Wherefore, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for *if* ye do these things, *ye shall never fall*; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

[2] Rom. 8: 35. 38. 39.

That such deliberate transgressions, however, as bring the sinner into a state, *in which* it is *morally impossible* that he should be saved, cannot leave him in a state of justification, seems almost self-evident. Is Paul warning the Corinthians [1] against impossibilities, when he says to them: "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall"? and the Romans [2] when he said, thou standest by faith; yet be not highminded, but fear? Was Peter in a state of justification at that instant when he voluntarily denied his Lord? or David in the moments of his uncleanness and guilt? It cannot be. These works of sin are incompatible with the existence of a living faith, and living faith is essential to justification. The truth on this subject is more definitely stated by the prophet Ezekiel.[3] "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done, shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he has trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die."

Let him, then, who thinks he standeth, take heed lest he fall!

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[1] 1 Cor. 10: 12.

[2] Rom. 11: 20.

[3] Ezek. 18: 24.

ARTICLE V.

OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE (AND MEANS OF GRACE).

In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministerial office has been instituted, whose members are to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. For through the instrumentality of the word and sacraments, as means of grace, the Holy Spirit is given, who in his own time and place, produces faith in those who hearken to the gospel message, namely that God, for Christ's sake and not on account of any merit in us, justifies those who believe in Christ.

Having in the preceding Article announced faith as the appointed and only condition of our justification, the Confessors proceed to describe the manner, in which saving or justifying faith is produced; and in delineating the means of its production they are naturally led to introduce that order of men whose duty it is to administer them. This article therefore treats first of the ministerial office, and secondly of the means, by the use of which justifying faith is produced. The discussion of the former of these subjects, we will for the sake of perspicuity, defer to Articles VII and VIII, under which we shall present such general remarks as we deem necessary on the subject of the church, her government and discipline; and now direct our attention to

The Means of Grace.

Means of grace are all those things which God employs to present divine truth to the minds of men and urge them to obey

it, and in connexion with which he bestows the immediate influences of his Holy Spirit.

I. *Generic Nature of these Means.*

All the means of grace may ultimately be reduced to RELIGIOUS TRUTH, in some way or other presented to the mind and impressed upon it. These methods are

1. *Written exhibitions of religious truth.* a) The holy volume is the grand depository of the sacred doctrines and precepts. Their instrumental character is clearly taught: "The law of the Lord," says the Psalmist, "is perfect, converting the soul." "Search the scriptures," says the Saviour, "for in them ye think ye have the words (doctrines) of eternal life." And Paul triumphantly exclaims, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation (that is, it has a divine and saving power) to every one that believeth it." How obvious then is the duty to study this sacred volume, and to aid bible societies in distributing it over the earth!

b) Other good books, written by uninspired men, as they derive their contents originally from the sacred volume, partake of the nature of the fountain whence they flow. How many souls are now standing before the throne of God, who were instrumentally exalted thither by the practical works of Arndt, Spener, Franke, Woltersdorf, Wesley, Baxter, Doddridge and others? Who that with the eye of faith has ever cast a glance toward heaven, would exchange the celestial glory of Arndt, for the crown of Napoleon?

2. *Symbolic exhibitions of divine truth.* a) *Baptism*, in addition to its being the initiatory ordinance into the visible church of Christ, is a symbolic and impressive exhibition of the doctrines of natural depravity, and the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, and is therefore an important means of grace in the church.

b) *The Lord's supper* is a symbolic and affecting exhibition of the facts of the atoning death of the Son of God, and of the various momentously interesting relations of that death to the moral government of the world, and the salvation of sinners. Nor are these truths any the less affecting when these outward ordinances are the signs by which they are presented to the mind, than when described in words. c) *The dispensations of Providence* in the course of human events, likewise partake of this nature. We see in the successive actions of men and the consequences which flow from them, many solemn exhibitions of divine truth.

3. *Oral exhibitions of truth.* Of this description are a) *preaching;* b) the *conversations if the truly pious,* who out of the abundance of their hearts delight to speak of what the Lord has done for them, to vindicate the ways of God to man, and, with Zion's songs upon their lips, pursue their heavenward course. c) *The admonitions* of pious parents, who feel their obligation to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. d) *Church discipline.* This embraces not only admonition to offenders, in which scriptural views of their duty contrasted with their conduct are presented to them; but also suspension and expulsion; for whence do these acts derive their authority but from the word of God? and what are they but official exhibitions to the transgressor, of those truths of God, by which he is denounced as a criminal? e) *Prayer,* though somewhat peculiar, still partakes essentially of the same nature. All prayer consists of three parts, adoration, confession, and petition. Of these the first is a devout repetition of the truths of scripture relative to the nature, attributes and relations of the adorable Jehovah; the second is a feeling and an humble acknowledgement, that our heart and actions correspond to the scripture declarations of human depravity; and in the third we present to God his own promises of pardon and gracious aid to the penitent and returning, or to the believing sinner.

II. *The Adaptation and Efficacy of these Means.*

We shall first speak of divine truth in general, and then specifically of prayer.

I. *The means of grace do possess a natural tendency to produce the changes requisite for salvation.*

We must reasonably expect from the character of God, that the means which he selects for any purpose, will be adapted to accomplish it. But the declarations of scripture on this subject banish all doubt. They not only assert a) in general, that "the scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation"[1] that they "are the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth,"[2] and that "we are born again by the incorruptible seed of the word of God.[3] But they also b) specifically mention the principal parts of this change as wrought by divine truth. The word is represented "as sharper than any two-edged sword"[4] to *awaken* and penetrate the heart of the sinner, the "law is a school-master to *lead* us to Christ;"[5] "the scriptures make us wise unto salvation by producing *faith*[6] in Christ; and we are *sanctified* by the truth.[7]

But, apart from these declarations of Holy writ, it is evident from reason that the truths of God's word must affect the human mind in the same manner as other truths. They have alike a tendency to instruct, impress and urge us to action; that is, a) to impart correct views of the subjects of which they treat, b) to excite our feelings, and c) to exert an influence on the will. Amid the rich treasure of truths contained in the sacred volume, some may be found having an evident tendency to produce each of the several changes, requisite to transform the careless sinner into an obedient child of God. In the case

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[1] 2 Tim. 3: 15. 16. 17.
[2] 1 Pet. 1: 23. James 1: 21.
[3] Gal. 3: 26.
[4] 2 Tim. 3: 15.
[5] Rom. 1: 16.
[6] Heb. 4: 12. Jer. 23. 29.
[7] John 17: 17.

of holy, unfallen creatures, this power of truth is probably sufficient, without the superadded immediate influences of the Holy Spirit, to conduct the willing creatures of God onward in the path of duty. But upon the *impaired* susceptibilities and powers of fallen man, these truths cannot exert an influence sufficiently powerful, even when faithfully attended to by the sinner. Hence

2) *The scriptures teach us, that these means are not sufficient to awaken, convert and sanctify the soul, without the superadded immediate influences of the Holy Spirit.*

This is evident a) from the fact, that God found it necessary to grant and promise these influences; b) that the scriptures in speaking of the moral change wrought in men, distinguish between the influences of the word and of the spirit,[1] and c) from express passages on this point.[2]

There is perhaps a tendency in some divines of the present age, practically to forget the scripture doctrine of the insufficiency of means, and attribute too much efficiency to the intrinsic (logico-moral) influence of truth. Nor is this error as innocent as might be imagined. It manifestly begets a sense of independence of God, unfriendly to the growth of genuine and therefore *humble* piety. It leads men to entertain and *even to express* absolute and definite expectations of specific effects of preaching *within a given time;* thus regarding conversion as a mere mechanical operation, and God as their fellow-workman, who must needs ever come at their bidding!

It cannot be doubted, that persons of very different moral qualification to receive the divine blessing, may and often do make the same external use of the same appointed means to at-

[1] 1 Cor. 3: 6. I (*Paul*) have planted, Apollos watered; but *God* gave the increase.

[2] 1 Cor. 3: 7. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but *God that giveth the increase.*

tain it. That God will bestow his blessing upon each as soon as he is qualified to receive it, and therefore on the one sooner than on the other, reason would lead us to expect and scripture clearly inculcates. In accordance with this is the declaration of the Augsburg Confession, that the Holy Spirit "produces faith" through the means of grace "*in his own time and place;*" that is, when and wheresoever he sees a moral fitness in the case.

The proper course, therefore, doubtless is, that ministers, congregations, and inquiring sinners, should use the means of grace with the utmost possible fidelity, because they are wisely adapted to accomplish the purpose for which they were instituted, because it is God who appointed them, and because he has given no promise of his blessing to those who neglect them. But they should at the same time recollect, that these means, though salutary, are not sufficiently efficacious, even when faithfully used, to awaken, convert and sanctify the sinner; and that the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit which are promised in scripture to those who ask them, are absolutely necessary. They should, therefore, also cherish a deep and habitual sense of their ultimate dependance on the blessing of God, and constantly combine with the use of means sincere and fervent prayer for that divine influence.

III. *Of Prayer, in particular.*

I. *The nature of prayer.* Prayer may be defined to be the sincere desires of the heart, for things consistent with the divine will, either orally or mentally addressed to God, in the name of Christ.

1. *These desires must contemplate objects consistent with the divine will.*

Not *miraculous gifts.* The passage in James,[1] in which we

[1] James 5: 15.

are told, that the believing prayer of the elder (minister) shall cure the sick, refers to the miraculous gifts of healing possessed by some in the apostolic age, which as they are now nowhere exhibited, must needs have ceased.

Nor must *wealth* or *worldly honour* be the subject of our unconditional prayer. For these the Christian is not directed to supplicate. The true philosophy of human happiness is doubtless expressed in the prayer of Agur:[1] "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me." Accordingly,

We are to pray, a) for *temporal blessings*, that is, for health[2] the supply of our daily necessities, and for as much temporal prosperity as our heavenly Father finds good for us. "Give us this day," says our blessed Saviour, "our daily bread."

b) For *spiritual blessings*, for our moral improvement, and every thing requisite to effect it, and to prepare us for heaven. Even the heathen sages saw the propriety of addressing our supplications to the supreme Being for temporal protection and favours; but they erroneously regarded moral blessings in an entirely different light. Cicero, in his celebrated work on the nature of the gods, introduces *Cotta* as saying: "Whoever gave thanks to the gods for his being a good man? But for his being possessed of riches and honours, and preserved from dangers he does." To the more enlightened eye of Christian philosophy, however, we appear dependent on God no less for our spiritual than temporal prosperity. How could an awakened sinner, who has learned to see his lost and undone condition, "work out his salvation with fear and trembling," if God were to sever the brittle thread of life, and thus permit him to drop into the pit of endless death; or supposing his life prolonged, if his body were racked with excruciating tortures, or his mind bewildered in the mazes and enveloped in the darkness of ma-

[1] Prov. 30. [2] 2 Kings 20: 2. &c.

niac night? This even the heathen ought to have seen. But if we add the fact, clearly revealed in the gospel, of our inability to attain the necessary change of heart, even by the most faithful use of the means of grace, if God were to withhold the influences of his Holy Spirit, it becomes an incontrovertible truth, that whilst with Paul and Apollos, we faithfully plant and water, our eyes must daily be directed to the throne of that God "who giveth the increase," for spiritual no less than for temporal blessings.

c) We should pray *for our rulers*:[1] a duty, alas! too much forgotten even by Christians, the faithful and general discharge of which might have saved our country from some national sins, and from the judgments which a righteous heaven will sooner or later inflict on us.

d) For our religious *instructors*.[2] This is indeed an important duty fraught with very extensive benefit to ministers and churches.

e) For our *fellow-men* at large, both friends and foes.[3]

f) *And especially for the kingdom of our blessed Redeemer*.[4]

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[1] 1 Tim. 2: 2.

[2] 2 Thess. 3: 1. 2. Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified; and that we may be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men. Eph. 6: 19. 20. Pray for me that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel. That I may speak boldly as I ought to speak. Col. 4: 3. 4. 1 Thess. 5: 25. 2 Thess. 3: 1. Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. Matth. 9: 38. Rom. 15: 30.

[3] 1 Tim. 2: 1. I exhort, first of all, that supplications, prayers and intercessions and giving thanks be made for all men. Matth. 5: 44. Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.

[4] Matth. 6: 10. Thy kingdom come. Matth. 10: 38. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. Isaiah 62: 7. Give him no rest—till he make Jesusalem a praise in the earth. 2 Thess. 3: 1.

The scriptures very frequently command us to pray for others. That these prayers will, when of the right character, be the means of some spiritual blessing to our fellowmen, cannot for a moment be doubted. That they will infallibly produce their conversion, is no where taught in the sacred volume, is inconsistent with the doctrines actually contained in it, and contradicted by the daily experience of all true Christians. The question arises, what is the nature of the blessings which such prayers do confer? Our heavenly Father may have methods of answer unknown to us; but the following seem evident. He may grant to those for whom we pray, a) some *temporal blessing*, such as deliverance from sickness, danger or want; b) an *increase of the means* of grace, more frequent preaching, a more enlightened and zealous pastor, a pious neighbour, an interesting and instructive book, a tract, &c. &c. c) by *some providential dispensation* he may impress known truth more deeply on their minds, and thus give greater efficacy to it, d) or he may grant them an increase, for a season, of the immediate influences of his Spirit, either now or at a future time. This influence however will, in this as in every other case, not be irresistible, and will terminate in real blessing, only when faithfully improved. e) Prayer for our fellow men tends to cherish in us proper feelings towards them; and, if sincere, will lead us to use every other means for their spiritual good. f) The conviction of others, that we are praying and labouring for their salvation, has a powerful tendency to make them feel and act for themselves.

The above principles, especially those of d) and c,) account for the manifest answers to prayer, often speedy and most remarkable, of which authentic accounts exist. Thus, prayers for the conversion of some particular individual, have often been the means of special blessing to him, which terminated in his change of heart. Here the Spirit may have recalled some known truths to the individual, or by some providence, or by

his immediate influence, impressed it more deeply on his mind. In many instances the sinner gives heed to this solemn call and becomes a child of God; in others, even this peculiar grace is resisted, and the sinner dies an enemy to his insulted sovereign.

2. *The prayers which we offer to God must be sincere*[1] *and importunate*[2] *and unostentatious.*[3] If not sincere, they do not express the "*desires*" of the heart; but are mere accents of the lips, really inconsistent with the feelings of the supplicant. If all the oral petitions, which do not express the feelings of the heart were suppressed, professing Christians would approximate much nearer to the command of our Lord: use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. What would we think of a fellow creature, who should implore of us relief from sufferings which we knew he did not endure, or the gratification of wishes which he did not entertain? And can the all-knowing God regard in a more favorable light prayers and confessions equally false?

3. *Our prayers must ever be conceived and offered in submission to the divine will.* Often we know not what is good for us, and our prayers granted would be a curse. Nero's mother prayed, that her son might be emperor. Her wishes were realized, but Nero murdered his mother. Thus, too, is the most enlightened Christian often mistaken, as to what will be most salutary for himself and best subserve the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. And all who possess confidence in the government of an omniscient and benevolent God, must cheerfully submit their fondest wishes to his will, knowing that he will do all things well. As Christians therefore, lay claim

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[1] John 4: 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

[2] 1 Thess. 5: 17. Pray without ceasing.

[3] Matth. 6: 6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret &c.

to this character, we cannot but rejoice, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and present all our petitions to the throne of grace with this proviso, "yet not my will, O Father! but thine be done."[1]

4. *Our prayers must be offered in the name of Jesus,*[2] must be accompanied with *a forgiving spirit,*[3] and *a purpose of universal obedience.*[4]

But the question has often been asked and is well deserving of a deliberate answer; since an omniscient God knows our wants before we express them, and, as an immutable being, will not change his purposes, is there any real advantage resulting from prayer, and can any efficacy be properly ascribed to it?

II. *The advantages of Prayer.*

1. Prayer has a tendency to *qualify us to receive the blessings desired, and thus to render it morally proper in God to grant them.* We have seen above, that prayer is in reality a meditation on divine truth, on our relation to God and on our own sinfulness and wants. This meditation alone cannot fail to exert a salutary influence on the mind. But the fact, that these reflections are orally expressed, and addressed to the supreme Being himself, in whose immediate presence the supplicant believes

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[1] Matth. 20: 21. 22. And Jesus said unto her, what wilt thou? She saith unto him, grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask.

[2] John 16: 23. Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Col. 3: 17. Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

[3] Matth. 6: 12. After this manner pray ye, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

[4] John 9: 31. If any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. 1 John 3: 22.

himself to be, must manifestly heighten this effect and enhance the value of prayer as a means of grace. What Christian cannot testify, that when pouring forth his confessions of sinfulness into the lap of God, he has felt a deeper sense of humility than ever before; and that when uttering his adoration of him, in whom all fullness of perfection dwells, his veneration has been still elevated, his worship been made more intense; and that when tendering his petitions for future pardon and blessing, his views of redeeming grace, emanating from such a God, and terminating on such a sinner, have been exalted to their highest pitch?

But a still greater advantage resulting from the faithful practice of this duty is, that

2. *Prayer is actually the means of procuring for us the blessings which we seek, and which, without it, we would not have attained.*

But how does prayer accomplish this effect?

a) *Not by producing a willingness in God*, to bestow the blessing. God is at all times willing to bestow on all men every blessing they are qualified to receive. If, says the Saviour, ye, who are evil, (but imperfectly benevolent) know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father (whose benevolence is infinite) give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?[1] An affectionate parent mourns over his dissipated, intemperate sons, whose habits disqualify them for making a correct use of the property, which he is no less *willing* than able to give them; but which he conscientiously withholds, because it would be no blessing to them, and continues to withhold until they by a reformation of conduct become qualified to receive it. When the inquiring sinner first addresses the throne of grace, he is wont to pray for every spiritual blessing. But is he morally qualified to receive a sense of pardoned sin, before he has rightly learned to see himself a sinner; or to appreciate the Saviour before he has felt his need of him? The delay of the divine

[1] Luke 11: 13.

blessing in answer to some specific requests is, therefore, in no case occasioned by an unwillingness in God to bestow it, but by the unfitness of the supplicant to receive the very grace he asks.

b) *Nor by producing a change in the purposes of God.* Among men we often see a change of purpose and conduct, in consequence of supplication; and gifts granted which would otherwise have been withheld. The question very naturally arises and has often been asked, does prayer effect a similar change of purpose in God? Let us analyze a case of such change, and see whether it would comport with the character of the divine Being. A pious father has determined to disinherit his profligate and intemperate son, and made his determination known to his family. The son, affected by the intelligence, reflects, perceives the propriety of his father's purpose, and determines to reform. He attends the preaching of God's word, prays for the influences of the Holy Spirit, and becomes a true christian. After sometime he returns to his father's house, confesses his guilt, and prays for aid anew to engage in business. The father, with rapture in his heart, meets the returning prodigal, falls upon his neck and kisses him, and having satisfied himself of his sincerity, grants his prayer. His first resolution was to refuse him any more property, because he was unworthy of it: his second, to grant him his portion, because he had unexpectedly learned his son's repentance, and believed he would now profit by what he might receive. The change of purpose was evidently occasioned by an accession of knowledge; but as such accession cannot belong to God, neither can the change. Had the father at first known, that his son, though now a spendthrift and a sot, would reform; what would have been his determination from the beginning? Doubtless that so long as his son was dissipated, no property should be granted him, but as soon as the foreseen period of his reformation arrived, he should receive as much as he could profitably employ to the full extent of his portion. Here then would have been no change of determination: but two si-

multaneous purposes, referring to different periods in the man's life, each suited to his character at the time. And such is the case with the several purposes of our heavenly Father, referring to different periods of an individual's life. Though successively executed, they were simultaneously formed in the divine mind, with a perfect foreknowledge of the conduct of the individual at each successive period, and always suited to that conduct.

Thus, too, we perceive the fallacy of the objection, that if prayer effects no change in the purposes of God, the blessings bestowed on supplicants after they have prayed for them, cannot be answers to their prayers. This would be true, if God had been ignorant of the fact, that these prayers would be offered; but having known this from eternity full as well as after they occurred, he could have had reference to them in the determinations of his conduct then formed, as well as after they had been addressed to him.

c) Nor does prayer exert its procuring influence, *by meriting the blessings sought.* It is indeed an act in accordance with the will of God, and as far as it is performed with sincerity, that is, from proper motives, it is certainly well pleasing in his sight. We cannot but regard those divines as in error, who teach that even the sincere prayers of awakened and inquiring sinners, are not pleasing to God. Their grand argument, that such prayers are imperfect, proves too much. It would with infallible certainty condemn the prayers of the most eminent saints; for though elevated higher in the scale of moral excellence, they and their best prayers fall far short of the perfection demanded by the law. When God says: "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination in my sight," he doubtless refers to such as are at the time voluntarily continuing in wickedness. And it is clearly a dictate both of reason and scripture,[1] that from the moment of the first

[1] Psalm 145: 18. The Lord is nigh unto *all* that call upon him

attempt of the most abandoned sinner to seek his forsaken God, every sincere effort and prayer are pleasing to that merciful Being who has left us in no doubt as to the feelings, with which he contemplates the returning prodigal.[2]

Still there is nothing in prayer that could merit the favour sought, any more than in faith to merit justification. Who would suppose that a beggar by asking a charity acquired a right to expect it?

d) But prayer is actually instrumental in procuring for us the blessings sought, *because it was appointed by God himself as a means and condition, on which he would graciously bestow the blessings that we need.*

When God, our righteous sovereign, devised the scheme of redeeming mercy, and determined to bestow his favour on our fallen race; he had doubtless a right, as it was a pure gift to which we had no claim, to fix the conditions on which he would bestow it. And whatever condition he fixed on would be efficacious because he appointed it. Thus he has selected faith as the condition of justification, and prayer as a means by which we can obtain those blessings temporal and spiritual, which he is willing to confer on us. It is not difficult, even with our imperfect vision, to see the wisdom of this choice. By prayer is meant "sincere desires for things agreeable to the divine will." Now these desires imply, in the supplicant, a) a determination to forsake evil and seek the kingdom of heaven, for this must be the tendency of all "things agreeable to the divine will;" and, b) such acquaintance with his own character and

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in truth (בֶּאֱמֶת, sincerity, Gesenius Aufrichtigkeit. 1 Kings 2: 4. Isaiah 48: 1.) Jer. 29: 13. The Lord said, ye shall find me when ye search for me with all your heart. Heb. 11: 6. He that cometh unto God must believe (have faith in) his existence and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

[2] Luke 15: 20. But when he was yet *a great way off*, his father saw him, and had compassion, and *ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.*

necessities, and with the nature of the thing desired, as makes it appear a blessing and desirable to him. These circumstances imply some moral qualification to receive and profit by the blessings prayed for, and thus evince the suitableness of prayer as the condition of their bestowment. Even if prayer were not appointed by God as such condition, it appears that it would be morally unfit in him to grant these blessings to any others than those who possess the qualifications involved in prayer.

The appointment of prayer is abundantly taught in scripture;[1] nor are examples wanting of the most interesting and striking answers to it. The earnest supplication of Bartimeus arrested the attention of the passing Saviour and secured him his sight. The cry of the publican, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner" exerted a justifying influence in the chancery of heaven. In answer to prayer the bitter waters of the desert were made sweet; the liquid stream issued from the rock in the wilderness; the dead were recalled to life; and the sun itself in the firmament arrested in its course![2]

Such then being the nature and efficacy of prayer, how important is it, that both saints and sinners should avail themselves of its influence, not only in securing the favor of God on their own souls, but also in drawing down from heaven the same blessings on their relatives, their friends, their enemies and the whole family of man! Christian, doth not thy heart condemn thee for neglecting thy interest at a throne of grace? Sinner,

[1] Matth. 7: 7. *Ask*, and it shall be shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. 26: 41. Watch and *pray*, that ye enter not into temptation. James 5: 16. The fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much. Philip. 4: 6. In every thing by prayer and supplication—let your requests be made known to God. Matth 6: 9. After this manner, therefore, pray ye: our father who art in heaven &c. Luke 18: 1.

[2] Exod. 15: 25. And he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet. Josh. 10: 13. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day.

poor wandering sinner, on the path-way to endless death, art thou aware of the fact, that even for thee, there is still hope, if thou wilt come in God's appointed way? Hear then and heed the voice of mercy: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Whether those events and influences which God produces in answer to prayer, are always mediately effected through the instrumentality of second causes, or whether the Ruler of the universe sometimes changes the natural train of events which would otherwise have taken place, has been disputed. If the former be the case, events thus produced are not the less real answers to prayer; because the train of causes to produce them, must have been selected with infinite wisdom to accomplish this specific end. Yet it may be true, as has been supposed, that in some cases, there would be an absolute impossibility or self-contradiction in the nature of things involved. In such instances doubtless the divine answers to prayer are effected by immediate interference with the order of the physical or intellectual world; exerted however in such a manner as will not in the least degree impair the freedom of moral agents. We must beware of regarding these acts of interference as unexpected to God; they were foreseen and determined on in eternity and formed as much as any thing else, a part of his plan for the government of the world. The scriptures seem to favour the latter view. Nor is its truth at all impaired by the fact, that in the train of causation so far as known to us, we perceive no instances of such deviation. The universe may be compared to a chain, of which the last few links only are visible to us; and the other end of which reaches to the throne of a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. In a few instances, recorded in scripture, he has touched the chain within our observation, and these events are termed miracles. But how often, and

when, he lays his hand on the higher and invisible links we know not. Yet here his influence would not be less effectual: and here it probably is that prayers frequently find their answer. Here it probably is, that the hand of Jehovah, unseen by mortal eye, oft times diverts the current of events into new channels, and originates new trains of causes, which whilst they confirm the faith and accomplish the prayers of believers, advance the purposes of heaven, and exhibit the whole machinery of the universe as sympathizing with the moral government of God.

ARTICLE VI.

CONCERNING NEW OBEDIENCE, (OR A CHRISTIAN LIFE.)

They likewise teach, that this faith must bring forth good fruits; and that it is our duty to perform those good works which God has commanded, because he has enjoined them, and not in the expectation of thereby meriting justification before him. For, remission of sins and justification are secured by faith; as the declaration of Christ himself implies: "when ye shall have done all those things, say, we are unprofitable servants."

This article together with the XIIth and XXth, contain all that the Confessors deemed it necessary to say on the subject

of repentance and faith. In order if possible to give perspicuity to our discussion, we shall treat of these several subjects under the general head of,

I. *The Changes wrought in the sinner by the Holy Spirit through the means of Grace.*

In commenting on this subject we shall have some reference to the terms usually employed by Lutheran divines in common with others, in the explanation of it.

1. The *call*, or *vocation*, is that invitation given to man by God, either mediately or immediately, to forsake his evil ways and accept the offers of mercy. The *immediate* call, is that which is given miraculously, of which the case of Paul is an example. The *mediate*, or ordinary call, is that invitation to reformation which God gives us through his word, the external circumstances of our situation, and the incidents of his Providence. This is the only call which men can now expect, it is given with equal sincerity to all who live in a gospel land, and brings salvation within the reach of them all, by tendering to them those means of grace which they have the ability to use with sincerity,[1] and the sincere use of which, the Holy Spirit will sooner or later make effectual to the conversion of the soul.

This view of the *call*, manifestly pre-supposes the acknowledged doctrines of the church, that man, if left to himself, neither would nor could turn to God; and that the means of grace, though wisely adapted to the end for which they were designed, are not able to convert the soul, without the additional influence of the Holy Spirit.

2. *Illumination* is that mediate act of God, by which, through the instrumentality of the means of grace, he imparts to the *inquiring* sinner correct and spiritual views of divine

[1] See pp. 141. 142.

things. No one, who perseveringly and entirely disregards the *call* of God, ever becomes the subject of illumination. Because this disregard includes in it the refusal to use the means of grace prescribed in scripture, through which alone the Holy Spirit illuminates the mind. On the other hand, if the sinner give heed to the call of God, to attend to the things pertaining to his peace; that is, if he sincerely search the scriptures, inquiring "Lord what wilt thou have me to do" and earnestly striving to conform to the will of God; he will find his views of divine things remarkably changed. His ideas of the moral excellence, especially the holiness and benevolence of God, of the extent, spirituality and justice of the divine law, of the evil of sin in general, and of his own sinfulness in particular, will became vastly more clear, correct and practical. This state of the sinner's mind is also sometimes termed a state of illumination.

3. But this change of *views*, which is the first effect of divine illumination, will be accompanied by another and equally striking alteration in the state of his *feelings*. Viewed in this clearer and more spiritual light, the moral excellence of the divine character excites in the illuminated sinner, feelings of love and adoration; the law in all its extent and spirituality appears just, salutary and lovely; whilst the depth of his own depravity, the multitude and aggravation of his sins, and his liability to the just displeasure of God, excite in him new feelings of remorse, sorrow and fear. These two effects of divine illumination, are produced in a more or less gradual manner, and usually keep pace with each other. Sometimes both these effects are designated by the term *conviction*, whilst at others, this name is applied only to the changed views of the sinner, whilst his new feelings are denominated *penitence*, or *repentance* in its limited sense.

Conviction, in the popular sense of the term, may therefore be defined to be the new and spiritual views of the awakened

sinner, concerning his own sinfulness and exposure to the wrath of God, together with feelings of deep concern for his salvation.

4. *Penitence*, or *Repentance* in its more limited sense, signifies those feelings of sorrow and remorse, excited in the mind of an (awakened) illuminated sinner by a consideration of his sinfulness and danger.

These feelings are different in degree according to the natural temperament of the individual, or his degree of religious knowledge, or the degree of his actual guilt. When this sorrow arises merely from a consideration of our danger, our liability to the divine wrath, it is termed,

a) *Legal* repentance, and has nothing truly noble or hopeful in it. It is the same feeling which the impenitent robber often has when he anticipates the speedy execution of the penalty of the law upon him.

But when these feelings of remorse originate from a conviction of our sinfulness, of the turpitude of our conduct in sinning against so good a God, against our nearest and best friend, our constant benefactor; they are termed,

b) *Evangelical* repentance, and belong to the noblest and most hopeful exercises of the awakened mind. They imply a perception of the intrinsic odiousness of our sins, of the beauty of holiness, of the justice of our condemnation, of the spirituality and excellence of the divine law, and a preparation of heart to understand and appreciate the plan of salvation generally.

5. *Faith*. Justifying faith is that voluntary act of the illuminated and evangelically penitent sinner, by which he confides in the mercy of God through Christ for salvation, on the terms offered in the gospel.[1]

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[1] The term faith has also several other significations in the sacred volume. a) It designates the christian doctrines themselves (objectively), as in the passage "Earnestly contend for the faith" &c. b) It signifies mere historical belief of the scriptures &c. thus "the devils believe and tremble." This *historical* faith must precede repentance,

a) It is a *voluntary* act, and therefore we find it commanded as a duty.[1]

b) It can be properly performed only by the *illuminated* and truly *penitent*; because the blind and unrepenting sinner neither sees his necessity of a Saviour, nor feels a willingness to conform his heart and life to the requisitions of the gospel. His faith, if he have any, is merely a historical belief of conclusive evidence, such as may be possessed by immoral men, and even by the devils themselves. The repentance requisite must, moreover, be of the evangelical kind. His *heart* must be deeply affected by the moral excellence of the divine character and his own sinfulness, and thus it is that "with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness."

c) Its *exact nature* is that of *confidence*, trust or reliance on God, and is similar to the confidence of a child in an affectionate parent, of one friend in the known character of another. It includes 1) a *knowledge* or belief of the character of God, and especially of the Saviour as deserving of our confidence; 2) *feelings* of approbation and delight in this character, especially as developed in the gospel plan of salvation, and 3) a *volition* to accept the offers of mercy on the terms proposed, that is, to act in accordance with this belief and feeling.

d) Saving faith is accompanied by good works,[2] by a life of holiness. No man can be sincere in his professed reliance on the Saviour, who crucifies him afresh by voluntary sins.

e) "Faith is the gift of God;" because it is he who calls, enlightens, and convicts us, and enables us to repent of our

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and has nothing in it, implying a spiritual change; but it is obvious from the above definition, that a *living* or saving faith can only succeed it.

[1] "Repent ye and *believe the gospel* (the glad tidings of a Saviour) Mark 1: 15. *This is his commandment, that ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* 1 John 3: 23.

[2] James 2: 20—23.

sins; without any one of which previous steps, justifying faith is impossible; because he affords us that knowledge of his own character and the plan of salvation, in view of which alone we can confide in him: and because, at this, as well as every other stage of our progressive moral improvement, he never fails to superadd the blessing of his Spirit to the faithful use of the means of grace.

6. *Sanctification* is a progressive conformity to the divine law and an increasing ability to fulfil its requisitions, wrought in the faithful believer by the Spirit of God, through the means of grace.

a) It is the work of God's Holy Spirit; as we are abundantly taught in the sacred volume: "Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."[1] That same divine influence, which was necessary at every previous stage of this moral reformation, is no less indispensable here.

b) It is effected through the means of grace. The word, the sacraments and all other means of grace, together with the dispensations of his providence both prosperous and adverse, are the principal instruments, by which the Parent of good advances the sanctification of the returning sinner.[2] Whilst the believer is living in the conscientious use of these means, and is thus pursuing the path of duty, the benign and transforming in-

[1] Rom. 15: 16. That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, (they) being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. 1 Thess. 5: 23.

[2] John 17: 17. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. Rom. 2: 4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? Heb. 12: 6. 10. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.—For they (our earthly fathers) verily for a few days chasten us after their own pleasure; but he (God) for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

fluence of the God of holiness is poured down upon him from on high.

c) The *faithful* believer alone can be the subject of progressive change. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, wrought through the means of grace; but so soon as the believer becomes unfaithful to his God, he both neglects those means and grieves away that Spirit, and therefore inevitably interrupts this glorious work. Sanctification, moreover, consists in an increase of holy habits in the soul; and the strength of these habits is augmented or diminished by every individual act. To maintain, therefore, that sanctification is invariably progressive in the believer, even when he relapses into sin, amounts to the repulsive position that acts of sin confirm our holy habits.

That the cooperation of the sinner, by the faithful use of the means of grace, is essentially necessary to the progress of this work, is also clearly taught in Scripture; where sanctification itself is, in this sense, even represented as the work of the believer himself. "Dearly beloved," says Paul to the Corinthians "let *us cleanse ourselves* from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness* in the fear of the Lord."[1]

d) This gracious change itself, as witnessed in the believer, consists in increasing conformity to the law of God and ability to fulfil its requisitions. The believer's *knowledge* of God and divine things, is expanded by the habitual study of revealed truth; is corrected by being brought into contact with the infallible word; is rendered more spiritual and vivid by the vouchsafed influence of the Holy Spirit. Col. 1: 9. His *feelings* on the grand subject of salvation, on the character and interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, become more ardent and intense. No subject lies nearer to his heart than the glory of his God, his own eternal welfare, and that of his fellowmen. The Saviour acquires increasing preciousness to his soul, he perceives in him

[1] 2 Cor. 7: 1. Rom. 12: 1. Heb. 12: 1. Ephes. 4: 22. &c.

the chief among ten thousands, one altogether lovely, and as the hart panteth after the water brook, so does his soul long for God. Accordingly, the tenour of all his *actions* too, evinces an increasing conformity to the divine law. His determination to live for eternity and God, acquires increasing strength and regularity, whilst he labours to lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset him, and run with alacrity the race set before him.

But as he advances in this process, he also finds his *strength* increasing. Before his clearer vision of eternal and divine things, the toys and baubles of this world dwindle into insignificance, and comparatively lose their tempting power. He finds himself strengthened with might in the inner man, and from a newborn babe he is gradually growing up to the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ.[1] The question whether the believer can attain absolute perfection in this world is discussed under Article XII. of the Confession, where it is specifically mentioned by the Confessors.

II. *Different names of this change.*

Thus have we reviewed the several parts of this great moral change in systematic order, and specified the names usually applied to them. Justification, which is sometimes inserted in this series, is not a change in man, nor even a divine influence exerted on earth, but a forensic act passed in the chancery of heaven. There are, however, a few other terms, which are used to designate either a part or the whole of this change, such as *conversion*, *regeneration*, and *repentance*.

Conversion in popular language, signifies the entire change, by which the sinner becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. *Regeneration*, likewise, in the scriptures, designates the whole

[1] Ephes. 4: 13.

change: "unless a man be born again," that is be converted, "he cannot enter,"[1] &c. In this sense of the term, regeneration is a gradual work; because the entire change is never wrought instantaneously, and because the scriptures teach us, that we are regenerated mediately, and the use of means must necessarily be gradual. "He freely (*βουληθεις* willingly) begat us with the *word of truth*,"[2] "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the *word* of God."[3] But it is also used by some religious writers, to designate a particular point in this progressive change, namely that moment, when the habits of the soul, which had before been gradually changing, acquire a preponderance in favour of holiness. In this sense, which is also adopted by some Lutheran writers, regeneration must be instantaneous; that is, there is a moment, and but a moment it can be, until which the habits of the returning sinner still preponderate in favour of sin, and after which the current of the soul, as it were, inclines toward heaven. As the foot of the traveller passes in an instant some imaginary boundary, that does not occupy space, but merely circumscribes it; so the soul, in its progress from sin to holiness, must ever be on the one or other side of this designated point, nor can it be imagined as stationary on it. This moment would coincide with the first act of justifying faith, yet in the order of things must be placed immediately before it. That there is, at this instant, any new faculty inserted into the soul, or any thing "implanted" into it, different in *kind* from what has already been described, we cannot find taught by reason or revelation.

The term *repentance*,[4] is also used in the word of God, to designate the entire change, and especially that *voluntary* agency, which is required of the sinner himself, in the progress of

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[1] John 3: 3. [2] James 1: 18.

[3] 1 Pet. 1: 23. See also 1 Cor. 4: 15.

[4] *Μετανοεω* litterally signifies to change one's mind.

this change; such as a) to "consider his ways" and direct his attention to the call of God, to his soul, that is, "attend to the things pertaining to his peace;" b) to examine the evidences of that rebellion and moral depravity charged against him in the scriptures; c) to cherish penitential feelings, and d) to turn to God, that is, to *resolve* no longer voluntarily to violate the laws of God, but faithfully to fulfil them and daily strive to lead a holy life. Thus it is used by the Saviour, Luke 13: 3. "Nay, but unless ye *repent* (*μη μετανοητε*,) ye shall all likewise perish."

III. *The duty of Repentance obligatory on all men.*

In the above sense of the word repentance, it may not only be urged on sinners as a duty, but also as an immediate one, always within their ability.[1]

First: That this repentance is a duty, obligatory on all sinners, is evident: for a) sin is in itself odious, is flagrant rebellion against a just God, and productive of misery in time and eternity; whilst this return to holiness is reasonable and right in itself, and never fails to advance our highest interests: b) because God has expressly enjoined it, he "commandeth all men every where to repent;"[2] and c) because the neglect of it excludes us from all the promises of God's word; d) because without it we are morally unqualified for heaven, and must be excluded from it: e) Because God tenders us every needful aid to *enable* us to repent. The sinner does not, indeed, possess the ability to perform this duty independently of the call of God's word and the means of grace; nor with these means, independently of the influences of the Spirit; but that with these auxiliaries, which are tendered with equal sincerity to all

[1] Acts 17: 30. Matth. 4: 17.

[2] Acts 17: 30.

who hear the gospel, man does possess the ability to obey the command of repentance, of a voluntary abandonment of the service of sin, and a sincere and habitual effort to glorify God, is presupposed by the very fact, that he is commanded to do so, on pain of eternal ruin. It is a dictate of common sense, that no man, (nor even brute) can justly be punished for not doing what it was never in his power to do, and the ability to do which he did not voluntarily lose. The term ability we here use in its popular sense, as embracing every thing requisite to bring a duty fairly within the sphere of our voluntary agency. The sacred volume explicitly inculcates the same doctrine.

1. The Saviour himself extols the woman in the gospel, who came to anoint him, by saying, "she hath done *what she could*."[1]

2. For, says Paul, "if there be a willing mind (sincerity,) it is accepted according to *what a man hath* (according to his ability,) and not according to that he hath not.[2]

3. God has given to man different degrees of ability, intellectual and physical, and of means of improvement; and requires a proportionate degree of activity from each; unto whom much is given, from him shall much be required.[3]

4. The same doctrine is taught by the parable of the talents,[4] the requisitions of God being graduated according to their number.

5. The conduct of Pharaoh in punishing the Israelites for not making more bricks than they were *able*,[5] and that of Nebuchadnezzar, in demanding of his astrologers, on pain of "being cut to pieces," what "no man on earth *can* do"[6] unless aided

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[1] Matth. 14: 8. [2] 2 Cor. 8: 12.
[3] Luke 12: 48. [4] Luke 19. Matth. 25: 14. &c.
[5] Exod. 5: 6—23. [6] Dan. 2—11.

by miracle, is represented as grossly tyrannical; and can it be just to ascribe similar conduct to our God?

Secondly: All sinners are bound to repent *immediately*, because, a) This voluntary agency is at all times in their power, unless they have been given over to judicial blindness; b) The guilt of our rebellion is augmented by every moment's delay. c) Our delay encourages others in sin. d) By deferring repentance we increase its difficulty. e) If we continue to grieve the Spirit of God, he may in righteous judgment withdraw his sacred influences, and abandon us to the hardness of our heart. God does not indeed, by any *positive* act, harden the sinner's heart; for this would make him the author of sin, and is utterly inconsistent with his character. But, that he justly may, and sometimes actually does withdraw the influences of his Spirit from the sinners, who have repeatedly resisted, quenched and grieved him, and voluntarily closed their eyes and hardened their hearts against his gracious agency, is clearly taught in scripture.[1] No individual in this life, can certainly know that he is the subject of this curse; yet all impenitent and careless sinners have reason to fear it: for as the means of grace are insufficient for our conversion, without the influences of the Spirit; it is evident, that, when thus abandoned of God, the sinner, though yet on earth,

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[1] Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee. Jer. 6: 8.—Rom. 1: 21—28. Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, &c.; wherefore God gave them up.—And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a perverse (*αδοκιμος* undiscerning, disapproved,) mind to do those things which are not becoming. Hosea 4: 17. Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone. Rom. 9: 18. Whom he will, he hardeneth (that is, abandons to the hardness of their heart.) Prov. 1: 24—33. Because I have called and ye refused,—I will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh, &c. God suffered Pharaoh to harden his heart by withdrawing his Spirit, and others do the same. 1 Sam. 6: 6. Wherefore *do ye harden your hearts*; as the *Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?* Exod. 4. Rev. 22: 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still. Heb. 6: 4. 8. 10: 23—31.

is the certain heir of hell. f) We ought to repent immediately, because death may at any moment consign us to perdition.

IV. *Of Christian Love or Benevolence.*

One of the cardinal traits of the Christian character, as produced by genuine conversion, is that of Christian love. The Saviour inculcates the exercise of this grace in the strongest language.[1] He commands us, not to exclude even our enemies[2] from our affections, in short, requires, that our benevolence be universal. The apostle Paul commands us, not to feel interested in those objects only which concern ourselves, but also to attend to and promote the welfare of others:[3] and St. John pronounces this benevolence an essential part of the Christian character, denying, that those can love God, who fail to love their neighbour. The statements of the sacred volume on this subject, exhibit a threefold aspect of love, viz.

a) Love of *complacency*, which is grounded entirely on an approbation of the moral excellence of the object. Such is the love of God to the holy angels and to his regenerate children on earth;[4] and such love the sincere Christian also bears to God and to his brethren in Christ.

b) Love of *gratitude* is that additional affection of the

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[1] Matth. 22: 39. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. John 13: 34. 35. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

[2] Matth. 5: 44. 45. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain to the just and unjust.

[3] Phil. 2: 4. Look not every one on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

[4] Isaiah 43: 4. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.

Christian to his God, which whilst it presupposes complacency in its object, rests mainly on a sense of obligation, resulting from blessings bestowed on us.[1]

c) Love of *benevolence.* This may be termed a desire for the happiness of sentient beings. Yet as the capacity for happiness in rational beings is incalculably greater than in irrational, this grace of the Christian character may be defined *a desire for the happiness of intelligent beings.* It is this love of benevolence which is mainly contemplated in the grand moral precept of the gospel, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

This benevolence is *disinterested.* The motive to its exercise is not the pleasure enjoyed by the Christian himself whilst indulging this feeling; but it springs from an abstract and active desire for the happiness of all sentient beings.[2]

Its *degree* is graduated according to the intellectual and especially the moral excellence of its object; or, as it is sometimes expressed, according to their intrinsic and relative value in the scale of being. Yet it is impossible by our mental consitution for us to love all men equally in degree. Even the Saviour exhibited some peculiar attachment among the little band of his apostles; and Paul tells us to do good unto all men, but especially to them who are of the household of faith.[3] Nor does this benevolence require, that we should love our neighbours in the same degree, in which we love ourselves. It is indisputable, that the principles of our mental nature, subsequently to conversion, as well as before it, exhibit a stronger attachment to ourselves and our own interests than to those of others. This principle, moreover, when regulated by grace, exerts a very important and salutary influence on the conversion of our own souls, and the consequent interests of the king-

[1] 1 John 4: 19. We love him, because he first loved us.

[2] Matth. 5: 43—45. Love your enemies &c.

[3] Gal. 6: 10.

dom of Christ in general. But true Christian benevolence requires, that we should really and sincerely desire the happiness of all the percipient creatures of God, in a degree suited to the intrinsic excellence of each.

This desire exhibits itself in a habitual readiness according to our means, a) to minister to the temporal wants of our fellow beings. This duty is clearly and frequently inculcated in the sacred volume.[1]

b) The truly benevolent man is ever ready himself to acknowledge, and by all Christian means, to vindicate the just rights of the oppressed[2] of every nation, tongue, or complexion. Hence the true Christian is not only a just man, but a sincere philanthropist. He believes that of "one blood God made all men, of every nation, and of every complexion to dwell on the face of the earth;[3] and therefore they are all by nature equal. Hence he feels a deep interest in the cause of human liberty and equal rights among the oppressed nations of Europe,

[1] Prov. 14: 31. He that honoureth the Lord hath mercy on the poor. 19: 17. He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he repay him. Luke, 16: 9. Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness (of your unsatisfying wealth,) that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. Mark 10: 21. And Jesus said, Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. 12: 42. A poor widow threw in two mites, and Jesus said, this poor widow has cast in more than ye all. Heb. 13: 16. To do good and to communicate (make gratuitous contributions) forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. 1 Tim. 6: 18.

[2] Luke 3: 13. Jesus said to the publicans, exact no more than that which is appointed you. Isaiah 1: 17. Relieve the oppressed. Jeremiah 21: 12. Deliver him that is spoiled, out of the hand of the oppressor. Prov. 22: 22. Rob not the poor, neither oppress the afflicted, for *the Lord will plead their cause*, and *spoil the soul* of those that spoiled them. Jer. 17: 11. He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.

[3] Acts 17: 26.

Asia, and America. Nor can his heart be insensible to the accumulated wrongs of poor Africa; He earnestly longs, that as soon as possible, liberty should be given to the enslaved negro in our land, that this condemning crime should no longer pollute our national escutcheon nor draw down the vengeance of righteous heaven upon our guilty heads.[1]

c) But the principal display of the Christian's benevolence to his fellow men, must be sought in *his sincere solicitude for the salvation of their souls.* For this purpose he not only agreeably to scripture, habitually exerts his influence at the throne of grace,[2] but is often engaged in devising new schemes, or executing old ones for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ; and is ever ready, according as the Lord has prospered him, to devote a portion of his earthly substance to this sacred purpose. The enlightened Christian regards his property as the gift of God, as resulting from the divine blessing on his basket and his store. He knows, that God has commanded us to do good and communicate, and make friends of this mammon of unrighteousness, because with such sacrifices he is well pleased. He knows, that his earthly possessions have but a relative worth, are valuable in proportion to the importance of the objects they are made to accomplish.[3] But what objects can bear comparison

[1] Psalm 103: 6. The Lord executeth judgment for all that are oppressed. Isaiah 58: 6. Is not this the fast that I have chosen (emblematic of the gospel day,)—to let the oppressed go free,—and that ye break every yoke? Philemon 15: 16. That thou (Philemon) shouldest receive him (the run-away slave Onesimus,) *not now as a servant*, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially unto me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

[2] Matth. 6: 9. After this manner therefore pray ye;—Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Matth. 9: 37. 38. Then saith Jesus unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few, pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

[3] Heb. 6: 10. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed *towards his name*, in that ye

with those, which the God of the universe commands, the salvation of never dying souls, the extension of that kingdom which our blessed Lord came to establish on earth, of that kingdom which will extend throughout the ages of eternity, in which he and all the faithful creatures of Jehovah will find their happiness and heaven? What application of our property, after suitable provision for our families, can promise us greater happiness in the future world? Can more certainly secure the divine blessing to our offspring? And what can be better cal-

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have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 3 John v. 5. 6. Thou doest faithfully (according to the principles of Christian duty) whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and to strangers; who have borne witness of thy charity before the church; whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: because for his (the Lord's) name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles (among whom they laboured; that is, like modern missionaries, receiving their support from Christians at home.) We therefore ought (*αφειλομεν*, we are in duty bound) to receive such, that *we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.* Rom. 15: 24—26. When I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you (Christians at Rome;) for I trust to see you on my journey, and *to be brought on my way thitherward* (to Spain) *by you.* But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints; for it hath pleased them of Macedonia, and Achaia to make *certain contributions, (collection) for the poor* among the saints at Jerusalem. 1 Cor. 16: 3. 6. And when I come, whomsoever ye approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality (contribution) unto Jerusalem.—And it may be that I will abide, yea and winter with you, that *ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.* 2 Cor. 8: 3. 4. For (I bear record) that to their power, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves; *praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, &c. &c.* ch. 9: 1. 2. For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: for I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you, &c.—v. 5. 6. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go to you before, and make up your bounty beforehand,—that the same might be ready as bounty (or bountifully) and not as of covetousness (sparingly!) But this, I say, *he who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.* See also the preceding note, and Rom. 16: 2. Phil. 4: 10. 2 Tim. 1: 16. 18. Matth. 10: 42. 1 Cor. 16: 2. Acts 28: 10. 1 Cor. 9: 11.

culated to retain in the mind of the Christian a lively sense of his responsibility in the use of property, than the habitual effort at suitable times to devote a portion of it to purposes which will tell throughout eternity, than the constant endeavour to dispose of it according to the commands of him who gave it? The Christian therefore should conscientiously determine, how much he ought annually to devote to benevolent purposes: and, when applied to aid any proposed object of benevolence, his only question can be, is the object really a proper one, and if so, to what proportion of my benevolent funds does its relative importance entitle it. Whether he shall give at all, according to his means, cannot be a point of doubt to the true disciple of him, who went about doing good.

But, when the rich man forgets, that he is merely steward over his possessions, and feels no obligation to give to just objects, but sends away empty those who submit to the self-denying duty of soliciting for charitable objects, or rather, of collecting what is due in the sight of God from every man of means, to any specific object of benevolence; there is great reason to fear, that in him will be verified the declaration of the Saviour,[1] How hardly shall a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven! Yea, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man, (a man thus abusing his riches and trusting in them) to enter into the kingdom of God![2]

Among the most undoubted institutions of Christian benevolence at the present day, may be ranked all the well-regulated Bible, Missionary, Education and Tract Societies, and Sabbath-schools in our land. And among these, the most efficient

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[1] Matth. 19: 23. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[2] Matth. 19: 24. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God!

and extensively useful have certainly been the American Bible Society, the American Education Society, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which are sustained by the joint liberality of several denominations.

ARTICLE VII.

OF THE CHURCH.

They likewise teach, that there will always be one holy church. The church is the congregation of the saints, in which the gospel is correctly taught, and the sacraments are properly administered. And for the true unity of the church nothing more is required, than agreement concerning the doctrines of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments. Nor is it necessary, that the same human traditions, that is, rites and ceremonies instituted by men, should be every where observed. As Paul says: "One faith, one baptism, one God and father of all," &c.

ARTICLE VIII.

WHAT THE CHURCH IS.

Although the church is properly a congregation of saints and true believers; yet, as in the present life, many hypocrites and wicked men are mingled with them, it is lawful for us also to receive the sacraments, when administered by unconverted men, agreeably to the declaration of our Saviour, "that the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat," &c.

In the seventh Article, the Confessors, without entering into the division of the church into visible and invisible, state that there will always be one true church, and that it consists of all true believers, however they may differ as to their peculiar human ceremonies. By this catenation of statements, they wished to prove to the emperor, that, although they had rejected many of the human rites and ceremonies of the Romish church, they were still members of the one true church of Christ, and justly entitled to his protection. In the eighth Article they oppose the error of the Donatists and others, who forgetting the difference between the visible and invisible church, denied the validity and efficacy of the ministerial acts of unconverted clergymen.

The grand principles adopted by the Lutherans in general is, that the Head of the church, designing his religion for all nations of every variety of civil government, did not prescribe any "entire and specific form of Government and Discipline," but fixed only

its radical features, which are equally admissible under all civil governments; and left Christians of every age and country to adopt such additional regulations as they may judge best. Adhering to this principle, the organization and government of the Lutheran church is in some respects different in the different kingdoms of Europe. In the succeeding remarks we shall exhibit the views which we deem most accordant with the spirit and precepts of the New Testament, and which are with few modifications received by our church in this country.

I. *The name.* The words used both in the Old[1] and New[2] Testament to designate church, signify merely an assembly of persons, and are applied indiscriminately to secular as well as to religious convocations. In the New Testament, the word church signifies 1. *the whole Christian church*, as in Matth 16: 18. Thou art Peter, (a rock, and on this rock the faith professed by thee) I will build my *church*, &c. 1 Cor. 10: 32. Give none offence neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the *church* of God, and ch. 6: 4. 15: 9. 2. *A particular church.* Acts 8: 1. the church at Jerusalem. 9: 31. 1 Cor. 1: 2.

II. The *head* of the church is: not the pope of Rome; nor the king, or any other civil ruler of a country. But the head of the church is none other than our blessed Lord himself. "Christ is the head of the church." Eph. 1: 22. 5: 23.

III. *Government and Discipline of the church.* Christians differ in opinion on the question, whether Christ has left on record any entire system of ecclesiastical government, which is obligatory on the church in all ages. Those maintaining the affirmative, are sometimes called *High-churchmen*, (*jure divino*,) however they may differ in opinion as to what is the precise system taught in the scriptures. Such are some Episcopalians and a very few Presbyterians. Those on the contrary are denominated "*Low-churchmen*," who do not believe

[1] קָהָל kahal. [2] ἐκκλησία ecclesia.

any system taught in the sacred volume in all its features, and adopt on the ground of expediency, such additional regulations as they deem most consonant with the genius of the civil government under which they live, best calculated to advance the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. To this class belong most Protestants and especially the entire Lutheran church in the whole world.

The several systems of government actually adopted in the Christian church, may be reduced to the following ; a) The *Papal* system, which aims at subjecting the whole church in the world, ultimately to the dominion of one man, the pope of Rome, and to reduce the civil governments of the earth to subjection to that individual and his court. This system, though constructed with all the wisdom and cunning of the most politic civil establishments, is doubtless the grossest deviation from the simplicity of the apostolic church, and is that form of ecclesiastical corruption against which the Reformers felt constrained to take the field. b) *The Episcopal*, which acknowledges the bishops as a distinct and superior order of clergy. c) *The Presbyterian*, which maintains the parity of ministers, the cooperation of ruling elders, and the union of all its churches ultimately under one judicatory of review and control, called the General Assembly. d) The *Independent* or *Congregational*, which in addition to the parity of ministers, holds that all power of government and discipline is possessed by the members and pastors of each individual church, and that the jurisdiction of each church over itself is final. And e) The *Lutheran*, as found in the United States. This, in reference to the systems before mentioned, is *Eclectic* in its nature. It embraces all those principles and precepts, of permanent obligation, which are contained in the New Testament, and such other regulations dictated by reason, best adapted to the genius of our free republican institutions, and calculated most successfully to advance the cause of Christ. The fundamental features of this system are

the following, viz. 1. *Parity of ministers*, 2. *Cooperation of ruling elders* as representatives of the church, 3. *Union of the churches within the limits of a Synod* for the regular purposes of review and government, 4. *Special Conferences* for the purpose of holding stated protracted meetings. These Conferences are subdivisions of Synods, embracing from five to ten ministers each, who are annually to hold several protracted meetings within the bounds of each district. "The chief business to be performed at them is to awaken and convert sinners, and to edify believers by close practical preaching."[1] 5. *An advisory union*, of all the different Synods in one *General Synod*. In the government of individual churches and of Synods the Lutheran church in the main resembles the Presbyterian. The power of the General Synod is however exclusively *advisory*, and therefore bears most analogy to the Consociations of the Congregational churches of New England. The details of this system as practised in the Synods connected with the General Synod, may best be learned from the Formula of Government annexed to this volume. The whole church as a body,[2] that is, the minister and all the members of each individual church in some cases personally, and in others by the church council as their representatives, possess the power to execute church government and discipline, that is, to receive new members, to censure[3] or exclude[4] unworthy ones, to restore penitents,[5] &c. &c. It is

[1] See the formula annexed to this volume, Chap. XVI. § 2.

[2] 2 Cor. 2: 6. 10. Sufficient unto such a man is this punishment which was *inflicted of many*. v. 10. 1 Cor. 5: 12. Do not *ye* (Corinthian Christians) judge them that are within?—therefore *put away* from among you that wicked person.

[3] 1 Tim. 5: 20. Them that sin rebuke, *before all*, that others also may fear.

[4] See note 2. and Titus 3: 10. A man that is an heretic (αἱρετικον, one who excites factions or divisions) after the first and second admonition, *reject*.

[5] Gal. 6: 1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are

worthy of notice that the plan proposed by that eminent divine, the Rev. Dr. Alexander of Princeton, for the reorganization of the Presbyterian church, on occasion of the recent convulsions of that body, and complaints of its unwieldy bulk and excessive power, is exactly similar in all its principal lineaments to the above Lutheran system as practised[1] in this country, by the Synods connected with the General Synod.

IV. *Officers of the Church.*

The officers in the Lutheran church are ministers, ruling elders, and deacons, who taken together constitute the church council.

Of Ministers.

The views of the Lutheran church touching the ministerial office, may be embraced in the following features:

a) This office was instituted by divine authority, and all Christians are bound to regard faithful ministers as servants of Christ and messengers of God.[2]

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spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. See also on the form of process, Matth. 18: 15—17.

[1] See Biblical Repertory for 1832. The grand features proposed to be altered in the present structure of the Presbyterian church are, that their General Assembly shall have only *advisory* power, and their Synods there proposed have each for its own district, that final judicial power now possessed by the General Assembly.

[2] Matth. 28: 19. 12. Go ye therefore and make disciples (μαθητευσατε) of all nations, &c. Acts 20: 28. Take heed therefore (ye elders of Ephesus) unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which *the Holy Ghost hath made you* bishops (επισκοπους, the same word as in Philip. 1: 1. and elsewhere,) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. John 20: 21. Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so I send you. Acts 14: 23. Eph. 4: 11. 13. 1 Tim. 3: passim. 2 Tim. 2: 2.

b) All the incumbents of this office are, by divine appointment, of *equal rank*. The parity of ministers by divine right is a doctrine which Luther strenuously and triumphantly maintained against the Papal hierarchy ; and his views were adopted by all the other principal reformers. Even in those portions of our church, such as Sweden and Denmark, in which some imparity is practised, it is advocated only on the ground of human expediency, whilst the primitive parity is unhesitatingly admitted. The arguments which place this doctrine beyond all doubt, are 1. That the word of God contains not the least intimation of diversity of rank among the standing ministry of the New Testament. Those officers who were endowed with miraculous gifts, and whose instrumentality Christ employed in the first formation of his church, were extraordinary and of temporary standing. We hear not a word in the oracles of God of such a being as a pope nor of *diocesan* bishops. 2. The different names applied to ministers, such as bishops, elders, &c. are used as convertible terms, and therefore must imply equality of rank. Thus in Acts 20: 17, we are told that at Miletus Paul convened the elders (πρεσβυτερους) of Ephesus, and in v. 28. he admonishes them to take heed of the church of God, which he purchased with his blood, and over which the Holy Ghost had made them *bishops* (επισκοπους). For the Greek word which is here incorrectly translated overseers, is the same which in other passages is translated bishop,[1] and ought to have been so rendered in the case before us, as it also is in the excellent translation of Luther. 3. In the instructions given by Paul to Timothy[2] and Titus,[3] for the appointment of ministers, in every place where they established churches, and the qualifications requisite for the office, he gives them directions for only one order of ministers,

[1] Philip. 1: 1. 1 Tim. 3: 2. Tit. 1: 7. 1 Pet. 2: 25.

[2] 1 Tim. 3. 2 Tim. 2: 2.

[3] Tit. 1: 5.

and says not a syllable about any other. But can it be supposed, that if another rank of ministers were intended to be established, there would not be at least some hint dropped as to the fact, or the qualifications requisite, or the mode of their induction into office? As to the deacons, for whose election Paul gives directions,[1] they were not ministers, but, as we are expressly told,[2] laymen elected by the members of the church "to serve at tables," in order that the apostles might be released from that duty and be able to give themselves "continually to prayer and the ministry of the word." 4. There are no peculiar duties any where in scripture assigned to different orders of ministers. 5. The final charge of our Saviour[3] addresses them all as equal. 6. History affords us not a vestige of evidence that imparity actually existed in the ministry prior to the third century.

c) No man has a right to assume this office without a *regular call.*[4] This call may be divided into internal and external. By the former is meant the conviction of the individual, that God has designed him for this office. This conviction is not at the present day produced in an immediate, extraordinary or miraculous manner, as in the case of the ancient apostles and prophets. God has prescribed a regular mode, according to which the ministry is to be perpetuated, and we have no right to expect a needless deviation from it. These ordinary eviden-

[1] 1 Tim. 3: 8.

[2] Acts 6: 3. 4. Wherefore brethren look ye out among you, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business (serving at tables:) but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. v. 3.—It is not reasonable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

[3] Matth. 28: 19. 20.

[4] Rom. 10: 15. And how shall they preach unless they be *sent?*

ces of a call are, first, *undoubted piety*,[1] secondly at least mediocrity of *talents*,[2] thirdly a desire or at least an ultimate willingness to serve God in the ministry;[3] and fourthly, the *cooperation of divine providence* by the removal of all insuperable difficulties. Oftentimes the Lord trains up men for his service by leading them through trials and obstacles of the most afflicting character, in order that they may become inured to hardships, like good soldiers of Christ; but if he suffered any obstacle absolutely impassable to obstruct the way of the ministerial candidate, he would thus absolve him from the obligation any farther to pursue his course. By the latter, or external call, is intended the regular induction of an individual into the ministerial office by one[4] or if possible several[5] existing ministers with prayer and the laying on of hands, or, as it is usually termed, by *ordination*.

d) No one ought to be ordained to this office who is not both intellectually and morally well qualified. Because 1. The apostle expressly requires, that they be qualified to teach.[6] 2. They are by their example to excite others to the practice of all christian virtues, and therefore must possess them themselves. 3. If not morally qualified, they are a stumbling block to others.[7] 4. If intellectually incompetent, they are the subjects of ridicule to the enemy, exert little influence among men, and bring disgrace on the church.[8]

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[1] John 3: 3. Luke 6: 39. And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?

[2] 1 Tim. 3: 2. A bishop then must be—apt to teach (adapted, suited for teaching.)

[3] Matth. 4: 20. 22. And they *straightway* left their nets and followed him—and they *immediately* left the ship and their father and followed him.

[4] Titus 1: 5. [5] 1 Tim. 4: 14. Acts 13: 2. 3.

[6] 1 Tim. 3: 2. 9. 2 Tim. 2: 24. Tit. 1: 9.

[7] Matth. 16: 6. Psalm 50: 16. [8] Rom. 2: 24.

e) The duties of ministers are principally these: to expound the word of God, to conduct the public worship, to administer the sacraments, to admonish men of their duties, and by all proper means both public and private to edify the church of Christ and extend it throughout the earth.[1]

f) Women are not permitted to teach. "Let your women keep silence, says Paul, in the churches (that is, in the assemblies for religious worship: The Christians had no public houses of worship in the first century;) for it is not permitted unto them to speak."[2] This language, as also that which he uses to Timothy,[3] is absolute and unequivocal. Nor is it inconsistent with what he had said in the same epistle to the Corinthians, a few chapters earlier (ch. XI.) where he had used these words: "every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head." For it is only necessary to know the significations of the Greek word for "prophecy," and the difficulty vanishes. These are, first to possess and exert the miraculous power of foretelling future events, and, secondly, to sing the praise of God in sacred hymns.[4] Now, if we suppose, that the former is its signification in the passage before us, it will follow, that the Holy Spirit did, in the apostolic age, at least in a few instances, inspire females to utter predictions of future events, accompanied by prayer, and that Paul in this passage directs them to wear a veil, whilst exercising this gift in public. Should any females, in any other age, possess the same miraculous power, it would doubtless be right to exercise it. If the second meaning be adopted, the passage is alike free from all difficulty: and would teach, that

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[1] See Formula of Gov. and Discip. Ch. III. Sect. I.

[2] 1 Cor. 14: 34. 35.

[3] 1 Tim. 2: 11. 12.

[4] In this sense it is used by the Septuagint in Exod. 15: 20. Num. 11:25. 29. 1 Kings 18: 29. and is equivalent to הלל, divinas laudes canere, sacris hymnis celebrare Deum.

when females attend public worship, to join in singing the praise of God, it is becoming and proper, that they should have their heads covered, and not unnecessarily expose themselves to the gaze of the other sex.

The other officers of the church are

ELDERS AND DEACONS,

whose duties are defined in the Formula of Lutheran Church government Ch. III. and IV.

Duties of Church-members.

The duties of church-members as individuals, have been sufficiently discussed in different parts of this volume. A few remarks only would we here make on a particular duty devolving on the church collectively.

The duty of affording a reasonable support to the ministry.

This duty is inculcated in the clearest and most unequivocal language in the sacred volume. Indeed when a church engages the entire services of a minister, and those services are faithfully afforded, every such church should regard it as a matter of common honesty to support the labourer who spends his strength amongst them.

The sacred volume does not however specify the manner in which this money shall be raised, nor determine how much is a reasonable support in any given situation. This of course must vary much in different sections of the country, with the different price of the necessaries of life. In Europe generally, and in the Methodist church in this country, the salaries of ministers are fixed. In Europe they are paid by the government, and ultimately raised by tax on the people. a) This is in direct op-

position to the spirit of the gospel, which requires that our aid of religion be voluntary. b) It is opposed, moreover, to the example of Christ and his apostles, who though they maintained, that those who preached the gospel should live of the gospel, inculcated with equal force the maxim, that contributions for religious purposes must proceed from a willing heart, be a free-will offering to the Lord. c) Nor is there a syllable found in the New Testament, specifying the amount which a clergyman shall receive. d) It destroys one of the strongest safeguards of the liberty of the people. If they have lost confidence in their minister, and yet cannot prove any overt crime against him so as to remove him by course of discipline, they need but withhold their support, and as a matter of necessity he must either change his conduct to regain their confidence, or must seek his bread elsewhere. But in Europe the people are often compelled to contribute to the support of men of acknowledged impiety, without any certain relief. It is true, in all the churches of the land except that of our Methodist brethren, a man who enters the ministry places himself in a situation, which, in nineteen cases out of twenty, amounts to a renunciation of all prospects of accumulating wealth, and in the majority of cases presents the expectation of a mere scanty subsistence. It is an undoubted fact, that three-fourths of the ministers of our land, those of the denomination above-mentioned generally excepted, are doomed to spend their life in straightened circumstances. Still this very fact presents one of the strongest safeguards to the purity of the ministry, and excludes from the clerical ranks thousands, who under different circumstances, would "for filthy lucre's sake" undertake to feed the flock of Christ. We suppose that a minister of Christ should ask no more than a decent, competent support; yet it is to be acknowledged that in many cases the churches hardly afford this to their spiritual guides. The support of Methodist ministers, we would regard as a full competency, and have only often been surprised that they should

still complain of its insufficiency,[1] especially as its provisions very justly extend to sickness, to old age, to widows and orphans. We have often thought that other churches ought to

[1] In order that our readers may judge for themselves of the fiscal system of this church, we annex some extracts verbatim from the printed Discipline published in 1825 (24th edition), a work, which with many features of rank aristocracy combines much knowledge of human nature, much business tact, and zeal for the cause of God.

Part 2. Section 4. (p. 171. 172.) I. The annual allowance of the travelling preachers shall be $100,00 *and their travelling expenses.*

II. The annual allowance of the *wives* of travelling preachers shall be $100,00; but this provision shall not apply to the wives of those preachers who were single when they were received on trial, and marry under four years, until the expiration of said four years.

III. *Each child* of a travelling preacher shall be allowed $16,00 annually to the age of seven years, and $24,00 annually from the age of seven to fourteen years; and those preachers whose wives are dead, shall be allowed for each child annually *a sum sufficient to pay the board of such child or children* during the above term of years: Nevertheless, this rule shall not apply to the children of preachers, whose families are provided for by other means *in their circuits respectively.*

IV. The allowance of superannuated, worn out and supernumerary preachers, shall be $100,00 annually.

V. The annual allowance of the *wives* of superannuated, worn out and supernumerary preachers, shall be $100,00.

VI. The annual allowance of the *widows* of travelling, superannuated, worn out and supernumerary preachers shall be $100,00.

VII. The *orphans* of travelling, superannuated, worn out and supernumerary preachers, shall be allowed by the annual Conferences, if possible, by such means as they can devise $16,00 annually.

Part 2. Section 5. (p. 179.) It shall be the duty of said committee or one appointed for that purpose, who shall be members of our church, to make an estimate of the amount necessary to furnish fuel and table expenses for the family or families of preachers stationed with them, and the stewards shall provide by such means as they may devise, to meet such expenses, in money or otherwise: provided the stewards shall not appropriate the monies collected for the regular quarterly allowance of the preachers to the payment of family expenses.

Part 2. Section 5. (p. 177.) It is recommended by the general Conference to the travelling preachers, to advise our friends in general to purchase a lot of ground in each circuit, and to build a preach-

adopt some plan to support their disabled ministers, their widows and orphans, and hope the annexed account of the plan of our

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er's house thereon, and to furnish it with, at least, heavy furniture, and to settle the same on trustees, appointed by the quarterly meeting conference according to the deed of settlement in our form of discipline."

We have not seen any separate deed for the dwelling-house of the minister, but suppose it to be like the form prescribed for their churches, by which the congregation, after having built a house of worship, relinquish all right of property in it to the General Conference for the use of the members of the Methodist church *in the United States.* This feature we regard as unjust, for the Conference may lock the doors of a church against the very people who built it, if they do not approve and support the measures of the Conference.

The modes of raising funds according to the book of Discipline are in accordance with the spirit of the gospel, by voluntary contributions. 1. Every circuit and station is expected to make an effort to supply the yearly allowance and provision for its own preachers: and if there is any surplus it is the duty of the stewards to remit it to the annual Conference. 2. Every preacher must "earnestly recommend to every *class* or *society* in his circuit," to raise a quarterly or annual collection, which is to be remitted through the stewards to the annual Conference. 3. Every preacher who has charge of a circuit is to make a yearly collection, and if expedient a quarterly one in "every congregation," where the people will probably be willing to contribute. 4. A public collection is made at every annual and every general Conference. 5. A meeting is held in every district, of one steward from each circuit, to take measures for providing a house and table expenses for the presiding elder. 6. An extra collection is taken in each circuit and station, some time previous to the sitting of the General Conference to defray the expenses of delegates to that body. 7. They have a chartered fund, which in Jan. 1829, amounted to $27,000, managed by the trustees of the General Conference, the interest of which aids in making up the salaries of the travelling preachers. 8. The revenue resulting from the book concern. Every Methodist minister is a book agent, having an actual interest in the amount of his sales; as the fund resulting from them, is one of the sources whence his salary is derived. Independently of this consideration, much spiritual good is thus effected by the extensive circulation of books which in general we regard as well calculated to extend the kingdom of Christ. See Meth. Discipline, *ubi sup.* Part II. Sect. 3. 5. 6. (p. 170—189) and Economy of Methodism, p. 96.

Methodist brethren may aid others in devising some remedy for their own case.

ARTICLE IX.

OF BAPTISM.

Concerning baptism our churches teach, that it is a necessary ordinance, that it is a means of grace, and ought to be administered also to children, who are thereby dedicated to God and received into his favour.

The blessed Saviour instituted several positive ordinances, of perpetual standing in his church, which are usually designated by the term sacraments; a word not found in scripture, and variously understood by different writers.[1] There has been much dispute about the number of the sacraments; but as this will depend entirely on the definition of the term which may be adopted, the controversy amounts to mere logomachy. The

[1] The following are the principal significations which the word sacrament has borne: a) a *military oath*; b) *a mystery*, thus it is used by the vulgate translation for μυστηριον in Eph. 5: 32. 1 Cor. 15. 51. c) the oath by which Christians bind themselves *in the Eucharist* and *at baptism*. In this sense Pliny uses it, Epist. 97. d) An external ceremony or religious rite, having a spiritual or symbolical reference to something unseen. Tertull. and Augustine.

Catholic church adopts seven sacraments, the Lutheran and other protestant churches only two, Baptism and the Lord's supper. "*A sacrament*," says Dr. Mosheim, "*is an ordinance appointed of God, by which the benefits purchased by the Saviour are not only symbolically represented to the senses, but spiritual blessing is also actually conferred on those who faithfully use them.*" That the sacraments do symbolically represent some of the most important *truths* of the Christian religion, nay that they represent them in a more forcible and striking manner than ordinary language could do, is admitted; hence, as divine *truth* is the grand means of grace appointed by God, it cannot be consistently denied, that the sacraments are also *means*, no less than seals of grace.

Baptism.

The prominent aspects of this subject may be referred to the following heads: the nature, the advantages, the subjects and the mode of baptism.

I. *Its Nature.*

1. It is of *divine appointment*. In communicating to men a revelation of his will, it has pleased our heavenly Father not only to select as its vehicle the ordinary language of men; but also, on some occasions, to avail himself of such innocent and reasonable customs, as he found existing among them, and adapted forcibly to convey or illustrate his doctrines. This appears to have been the case in the selection of baptism; as the initiatory ordinances of the New Testament church. The classical reader need not be informed, that various lustrations were customary among the heathen nations of antiquity, before the time of Christ. The Egyptian priests also, were required often to purify themselves with water. It was by the ceremony of baptism, that the

Essenes, a Jewish sect of rigid principles, admitted members to their association; and there is very strong evidence, amounting almost to moral certainty, that the custom of proselyte baptism[1], that is, of baptizing those heathen, who were admitted to the Jewish church, which is known to have generally prevailed among the Jews about a hundred years after the crucifixion, had been extensively practised even before the time of our Saviour. John the baptist baptized his followers, as did some of the disciples of our Lord, even before he had formally instituted this rite as the initiatory ordinance of his church[2]; and the Jews certainly expected, that the Messiah would practise baptism.[3] It is evident, therefore, that in adopting this rite as the initiatory ordinance of the New Testament church, he chose a rite, which had been familiar to both Jews and Gentiles, and was well understood by them as a symbolic exhibition of moral purification, and as a means of admitting members to a religious association. Nor does the fact, that the Saviour selected a rite, which had been customary and well understood, divest that rite, when thus adopted, of divine authority; any more than the fact of his having delivered his doctrines in the customary and well understood language of his age, deprives his revelation of similar character.

That the Lord Jesus did appoint baptism in his church we are explicitly taught by the evangelists:[4] "*Go ye, there-*

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[1] The practice may have originated from the ablutions prescribed Gen. 35: 2. Ex. 19: 19. Lev. 13:—15.

[2] John. 3: 22. 4: 1. 2.

[3] And they asked him and said unto him, why baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Messiah, nor Elias, nor that prophet?

[4] Matth. 28: 19. 20. Mark 16: 16. And he said unto them: go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. John 3: 5. Except a man be born again, of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

fore" said he just before his ascension to heaven, "*and make*[1] *disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.* These words contain a general command to make disciples of all nations, and two specific directions how it is to be accomplished; a) by baptizing them in the name of the triune God, and b) teaching them to observe whatsoever he had commanded. By the former, they are made members of the visible church; by the latter, they are to be trained up as worthy followers of their divine Master. Baptism is, therefore, a duty obligatory upon all, who have an opportunity of receiving it; and upon them alone. The irregular practice of lay baptism, was introduced into the church, in consequence of the superstitious and unscriptural notion of the absolute and unconditional necessity of baptism to salvation.

2. The *essential constituents* of Christian baptism are, that water be applied to a suitable subject, by an authorized minister of Christ, in the name of the triune God. a) Water was wisely selected, because it is every where found, and well adapted to express the signification of this ordinance[2] and the obligations of its subjects.[3] The question, whether in a case

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[1] The common version is here evidently incorrect. The word μαθητευσατε is derived from μαθητης a disciple, and signifies "to make disciples." This version which we find even in the Peschito or Syriac version of the 2d century, is now acknowledged to be correct by all respectable critics.

[2] Acts 22: 16. And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord. Eph. 5: 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word.

[3] Heb. 10: 22. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Eph. 5: 26.

of absolute necessity, milk or wine, or sand might be used, must be answered in the negative. b) It must be applied to a suitable subject, not to a bell, or organ, or any other inanimate object; but to a sane human being. c) It must be applied by an authorized person. The Saviour entrusted the duty of baptizing to the same persons who were to "teach," that is, to the ministers of his gospel. And d) The water must be applied in the name of the triune God. Hence the baptism of Socinians, who do not use the name of the Trinity, is not Christian baptism.

3. *The Import of Baptism.* This is, a) *Symbolic.* It figuratively represents the process of spiritual purification, and thus 1. implies that natural depravity, of which we need to be cleansed: 2. teaches the remedial nature of the New Testament church, which prescribes the means of purification: and 3. the influences of the Holy Spirit, which accompany these means.

The influence of baptism is also, b) *Initiatory.* This is explicitly taught by the Saviour, when he says, "make disciples of all nations (by) baptizing" and teaching them, &c. It was moreover, viewed in this light by the Jews generally, and by the Essenes, before it was appointed by the Saviour; and it has uniformly been so considered by Christians from the days of the apostles. Baptism is, therefore, that ordinance by which alone men can be admitted into the visible church of Christ.

The third import of baptism is c) *federal.* By this ordinance we enter into a solemn covenant with our God,[1] as did the Jews by circumcision.

4. To the foregoing prescribed constituents of baptism, various unauthorised additions were made. Such was the superstitious ceremony of *exorcism*, by which the priest designed to expel the evil spirit from the candidate for baptism, prior to the administration of the ordinance.

[1] 1 Peter 3: 21. The answer (stipulation) of a good conscience (επερωτημα stipulation or profession). Gal. 3: 16. 18. Gen. 17: 7.

Owing to the frequent persecutions of the early Christians, baptism was even in the second century, performed in the presence of witnesses termed *sponsors*, who in case of necessity might attest the fact, and if requisite, provide for the religious education of the baptized. These sponsors were still unnecessary; because the church record ought to attest the baptism, and it is always the duty of the church to provide for the religious education of her orphan or destitute children. In the Lutheran church of America, this custom is rapidly declining. Several synodical recommendations of its abandonment have been published to our churches, with the happiest results.

II. *Subjects of Baptism.*

The next inquiry presenting itself is, Who are the proper subjects of baptism?

I. The command of the Saviour, Go ye therefore and make disciples of *all nations*, baptizing them, &c. is general in its terms; and whilst it does not specifically mention either adults or infants, males or females, manifestly embraces them all. It is admitted by all, that

Adult believers are proper subjects of baptism; those who having heard the gospel call, believe its representations, and have resolved to accept the offers of mercy as presented in it.

We shall present the argument for infant baptism in its simplest, *historical and exegetical* form.

The language of the Saviour's precept being general, "baptize all nations," also includes *infants*; unless other texts can be found declaring, that they shall be debarred from the privilege, or unless the circumstances of the case naturally limit the words. But even the opponents of infant baptism do not pretend to find any such passage in the sacred volume. And the *circumstances*, in which these words were uttered, instead of limiting their meaning, afford additional and incontestable proof

that the apostles and other Jews could not possibly have understood them as designed to exclude infants. For

a) They well knew, that God *had expressly commanded the admission of infants into his visible church*; when he first made his covenant with Abraham, appointed circumcision as the initiatory rite, and determined to whom it should be applied.[1] On this subject there never had been and never could be any doubt. The covenant was expressly extended to infants descended from Abraham, to servants born in Jewish families, and to servants purchased with money.

b) They well knew, that the covenant, which God thus made with their father Abraham, and on the basis of which infants were received into the visible church, *was not a temporary one, soon to be abolished*; but that it was to remain in its essential features *through all future generations*, for an *everlasting covenant*; God promising to be a God unto them and to their seed after them,[2] and requiring them to be his people. The same covenant was promulgated anew by Moses, *as the covenant made with "Abraham;"*[3] and represented as the basis of that visible people of God, which should profess his name in all future generations.

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[1] Gen 16: 10—14. This is my covenant which you shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; Every man *child* among you shall be circumcised—and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And *he that is eight days old* shall be circumcised among you, *every man child in your generations*; he that *is born in the house, or bought with money* of any stranger, which is not of thy seed;—and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an *everlasting covenant.*

[2] Gen. 17: 7. To Abraham God said: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee."

[3] Deut. 19: 13—15. That he may establish them to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers; to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob: neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath,—but also with him that is not here with us this day.

c) They knew too, that, in accordance with these divine commands *children had, for nearly* TWO THOUSAND YEARS, *been invariably received into the church of God.* Nor was this the case only with the children of Jewish parents. When individual proselytes were made, as was frequently done, both in Greece and at Rome, and when after the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, whole nations, such as the Idumeans, Itureans, and Moabites professed Judaism, their children were also uniformly received. Various alterations had been made in the external ceremonials of worship, but nothing had been ordained changing the nature of "the everlasting covenant," no one had during this long course of nearly twenty centuries, contended, that God had excluded children from the privileges originally granted them, or that he would hereafter exclude them. They had therefore never heard and never expected to hear of a church of God, into which children were not received. Accordingly, when the Saviour uttered the general and unlimited command; go ye and make disciples of "*all nations;*" how could they possibly understand him by these general terms to convey a new and unheard of restriction, which was contrary to all their prepossessions, feelings, and opinions, and of which they could not know any thing, unless it had been explicitly communicated to them.

d) The force of these circumstances is augmented by the fact, that baptism had been introduced among the Jews in connexion with circumcision as an *initiatory rite*, and was thus applied to infants. It has already been stated, that the Jews generally, and the Essenes in particular, had prior to the Saviour's advent, been in the habit of receiving proselytes by baptism. But their own writers inform us that it was customary also to baptize the children of those who were thus received.

The truth of their statement is confirmed by other testimony, which clearly establishes the fact that infant baptism prevailed very generally among the Jews, at least as early as about a century after the crucifixion; and as it cannot well be believed that

they had borrowed this practice from the Christians, whom they so much detested and persecuted,[1] their own account is the more credible, that the custom of baptizing infant proselytes existed before the time of Christ.

But let the Jewish authors on this subject speak for themselves. *Maimonides*, confessedly one of the most learned among all the Jewish writers, says:[2] "*There are three things, by which the Israelites entered into covenant with God, circumcision,* BAPTISM *and sacrifice. Baptism was practised* IN THE DESERT BEFORE THE GIVING OF THE LAW. *For God said to Moses, sanctify them to day and to-morrow, and let them* WASH *their clothes.*

"*The same practice also existed in later times: for circumcision,* BAPTISM *and a voluntary offering were required of every gentile, who assumed the vows and entered into the covenant to obey the law and to take refuge under the wings of the divine majesty.*"

As to the baptism of the children of proselytes, Jewish writers testify that it was the prevailing custom. "*Children,*" says Rabbi Hona,[3] (Talmude Chetuboth, Perek 1.) "are baptiz-

[1] In the Dissertat. Epicteti, published by Arrian, a Greek historian of the second century, the term, *βεβαμμενος* (baptized) signifies a Jewish proselyte.

[2] In his treatise called Issure Biah, Perek 13. Tria sunt, per quæ fœdus cum Deo inivit Israel, circumcisio, baptismus et sacrificium.

Baptismo usi sunt in eremo ante datam legem: Jehova enim edixit Mosi, sanctifices eos hodie, et cras, et lavent vestimentum suum (Ex. 19: 10.)

Ita etiam fit in temporis progressu. Circumcisio enim, et baptismus, et munus voluntarium requirebatur ab ethnico quocunque, cui erat in votis fœdus inire, sub alas divinæ magestatis seipsum obtegere, et legis jugum suscipere.

[3] Parvulum baptizant ex instituto consistorii.—Si pater ei non fuerit, velit autem mater ut fiat proselytus, baptizatur actutum, quia ci-

ed by direction of the Consistory."—If a child have no father, but his mother desires that he should be received as a proselyte, he is baptized immediately, because without circumcision and baptism, no one can be a proselyte." "But what benefit," (says the Talmudic text) "can thence arise to him, as he is wholly ignorant of the act? Tradition informs us that privileges have been conferred on those who were ignorant of their nature."

Moreover, Maimonides[1] says, If an Israelite finds a gentile boy or infant, and baptize him—he is thenceforward regarded as a proselyte.

Again,[2] "If a woman be baptized whilst in a state of gravitation, and be received into the number of the proselytes, there is no necessity for baptizing her infant when it is born."

"These and other testimonies, remarks the learned and excellent Dr Lightfoot, render it morally certain that not only the baptism of adult proselytes, but also of their infants, was customary among the Jews before the time of John. They also demonstrate, why so little is said in the New Testament, concerning the mode and subjects of baptism; namely, because baptism itself, and the circumstances connected with it, were so perfectly well understood before."[3]

Under these circumstances it is evident, that the Jews could not possibly have understood the general language of our

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tra circumcisum præputium et Babtismum collatum, proselytus nullus fit.—Quod beneficium ei atque privilegium inde oriatur, quantumvis id totus ignoret.—Traditione accepimus, collata fuisse privilegia hominibus eorum prorsus nesciis.

[1] Si Israelita ethnicum parvulum, seu infantem reperiat et repertum—baptizet, ecce proselytus continus evadit.

[2] Si mulier, dum gravida fuerit, baptizetur, atque in proselytorum numerum ascribatur, nihil opus erit infante, cum natus fuerit, baptizato.

[3] See Lightfooti Opera, Tom. I. p. 390. 391. 392. edit. Fanequersecund.

Saviour, as excluding children from baptism. On the contrary, as they knew, that God had explicitly required the admission of children; as they knew, that the covenant, by virtue of which they were received, extended to all generations; as they knew that children had been admitted from the time of Abraham till their day, a period of nearly two thousand years; and had never heard of a church from which they were excluded; we are authorized in laying down the following two positions as incontestably evident: a) *That if the Saviour designed to convey the idea of so novel and important an alteration as the exclusion of children would have been, he must necessarily have given an explicit statement on the subject.*

b) *That, under these circumstances, an explicit command for the continuance of infant membership, would have been as superfluous and unnatural as a similar precept for adult membership.* Accordingly, the blessed Saviour, who is ever consistent with himself, uses language which, whilst it does not specify males, females or children, fairly embraces them all.

The utmost that can reasonably be expected in this case is, that the Scriptures, whenever they do mention the subject of baptism, would use language consistent with its application to children as well as to adults. But the declarations of Scripture are not only consistent with infant baptism, there are passages which evidently imply this practice, and even some in which it is expressly stated, that on the profession of faith by the heads of families, *they and their whole households* were baptized.

1. We begin with the testimony of our Saviour himself, Mark 10: 14. "But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them (the disciples), suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." It is well known to those acquainted with the phraseology of the New Testament, that the expressions "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven,"[1] are familiarly

[1] *βασιλεια του θεου—του οὐρανου.*

used to designate the church of God under the New Testament economy. Thus John the Baptist preached, saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It will not be supposed that heaven was literally descending to the earth and had almost arrived amongst us; but the Saviour evidently meant, that the time for remodelling his church into its New Testament form was at hand. Accordingly, in the above passage, his meaning evidently is: suffer these little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such also shall my church consist. Nor could he have meant, "my church shall consist of such adults as have a childlike disposition;" for that would have been no reason for his wishing actual children to be brought to him.

2. The next passage is the declaration of Paul,[1] "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean," *but now are they holy*. It is admitted by all, that the word "holy"[2] has two generic significations in Scripture, consecrated or set apart to the service of God, and moral purity. In the former, which is its primary sense, it is applied to temples, cities, priesthood, Jewish nation, days, &c.[3] Thus the term is applied to the Jewish nations in the midst of their corruption, and by some of the Rabbins, to their most profligate kings. Now, in the passage under consideration, the latter signification is inapplicable, for what could be more absurd than the supposition that moral purity is propagated by natural generation? The former must therefore be its import, which moreover harmonizes fully with the context. The apostle is discussing the rela-

[1] 1 Cor. 7: 14.

[2] ἅγιος, קָדוֹשׁ.

[3] Matth. 4: 5. The devil taketh him up into the *holy* city. 24: 15. 27: 53. Acts 6: 13. 7: 33. Rom. 11: 16. Levit. 20: 26. Dan. 8: 24. "And he shall destroy the mighty, and the holy people." Matth. 7: 6. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs. Luke 2: 23. "Every first born male shall be called holy to the Lord."

tion of marriage to the church, and supposes the following case. A Corinthian Christian might say: "I perceive that the children of my believing neighbours are regarded as holy, that is, consecrated to God, received as belonging to the church, and my unbelieving neighbours and their children are declared unclean together, not belonging to the church or holy people of God: what is to become of my children? I indeed, am a believer, but my wife or my husband is an unbeliever: are my children to be regarded as holy unto God, or not?" The apostle answers; God has determined that the believing party shall so sanctify, or overrule the relation of the other to God, that their mutual children by virtue of the right of the believing party, shall be regarded as holy to God, that is, as belonging to his church or people.

3. The declaration of Peter:[1] Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,—For *the* promise is to you *and to your children* and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (to a knowledge of the gospel). But, was there any particular promise, known among the Jews as *the* promise? O Yes! The son of Abraham will answer, "that promise which God made to father Abraham, that he would be a God to him and his *seed* after him, and that they should be his people forever: the promise of eternal life through the Saviour, the covenant on the basis of which we the Jewish people, both parents and children, are separated from other nations as the professing people of God. This is the promise, and we all understand what it means." Well, this promise, says Peter, is continued unto you now under the New Testament dispensation, as well as under the old, and not to you only whom I am addressing, but also to your *children*. What can be plainer?

4. But in addition to all this evidence, there are several in-

[1] Acts 2: 38. 39.

stances in which *the apostles baptized whole families*, that is, according to the ordinary signification of the terms, both parents and children.

a) The *family* of *Lydia*, Acts 16: 15. And when she (Lydia) was baptized and her *household*.

b) The family of the *Jailor* at Philippi. 16: 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, *he and* ALL HIS, straightway.

c) The family of *Stephanas*, 1 Cor. 1: 16. I (says Paul) baptized also the household of Stephanas. In reference to all these cases it is to be observed; *first*, that the terms used "household" (οικια) and "all his," are those, which, in the ordinary language of men, would be employed to designate whole families, that is, parents, together with their children, and such other minors as constituted part of the family. The force of this evidence will be the more clearly understood from the fact that in all the histories of those churches, which reject infant baptism, not a single case occurs in which this phraseology is used. In short, it would be entirely unnatural for those who admitted only adults to speak of baptizing certain parents, "and *their families*." Who ever heard of family baptisms, in the accounts published of the Baptist missionaries? *Secondly*, it appears evident in the above scripture examples, that the faith of Lydia, of the Jailor and of Stephanas, was the ground on which the family of each of them was baptized; otherwise it is unaccountable, that in no case the faith or profession of any others of the family is mentioned. But according to the rejectors of infant baptism, the faith of parents is not the ground for the administration of this ordinance to any but themselves. The language of scripture is, therefore, in this respect also, inconsistent with their views, and evidently implies pedobaptism.

The above historico-exegetical view of this disputed subject seems to us perfectly conclusive. There are however others of perhaps equal strength.

II. The propriety of infant baptism may be proved *from the essential unity of the church of God in the Old and New Test. dispensation.* The argument may be stated thus: *An ordinance which God himself appointed in his church, and which he never revoked, we have no right to reject;*

But God did confessedly appoint infant membership in his church, and did never revoke it;

Therefore, we have no right to reject it.

The first of these propositions (the major), is admitted by all. When God first appointed circumcision as the badge of external membership, he also expressly commanded its application to infants on the eighth day.[1] Nor is it pretended that God ever revoked this ordinance, for not a syllable of such an import is contained in the bible. But it is contended that the Old and New Test. church is totally distinct, that the old was torn down, and an entirely new church erected in its stead, so that if infant membership were intended to be retained, it must needs be commanded anew. The New Testament, however, teaches a different doctrine representing the Christian church as built on the Jewish, as being only the more perfect and complete economy of the one church of God. "Think not," says the blessed Saviour, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," or rather to *make perfect* (πληρωσαι to complete).[2] The apostle Paul, also, speaking of the future restoration of the Jews, says; They also if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in *again*. For if thou (gentile) wert cut out of the olive tree that is wild by nature (heathenism); and wert graffed contrary to nature, into a good olive tree (the Jewish church); how much more shall these (Jews), who are the natural branches, be

[1] Gen. 17: 12. And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you; every man child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, who is not of thy seed.

[2] Matth. 5: 17.

graffed into their own olive tree (church)? The olive tree here must signify the Jews, either as a nation or a religious community, a church of God. It cannot mean the former, for the gentiles never were graffed on the Jewish nation. It must then mean the *church*. Now the apostle teaches, that the Jews were cut off from this church, by unbelief, and the gentiles received or graffed into it, and in the fulness of time the Jews shall again be received into their own church or olive tree, which must therefore be still standing: that is, the Christian and Jewish churches are essentially one and the same church. When therefore an ordinance is once established in it, it remains in force until revoked by God. Hence as infant membership has confessedly not been revoked by God, our conclusion irresistibly follows, that we are not at liberty to reject it.

III. A third argument for infant membership may be deduced from the fact, that the reason which led to its appointment under the Old Testament dispensation, exists with equal force under the New. That reason doubtless was, the peculiar necessity of children to be instructed, and consequent propriety of placing them under the religious direction of parents and of the church. No instance can be specified, in which an ordinance of the Old Testament was abolished, if it was equally necessary in the New, unless a substitute was appointed. Here no substitute is pretended, and yet the reason for the original rite remains undiminished. The appointment itself therefore remains in force until revoked.

IV. Another argument for infant membership is derived from the fact, that the New Testament speaks of children, just as the Old does when they certainly were members. That is, they are represented as candidates for eternal glory, to be trained up by Christian instruction, and numerous directions are given, how to rear them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.[1]

[1] Eph. 6: 4. Col. 3: 21.

V. Another argument may be derived from the acknowledged circumstance, that baptism has come in the place of circumcision, that is, appointed to accomplish the same general ends, to be an initiatory ordinance into God's church, and to represent moral purification. Now as baptism has evidently been substituted instead of circumcision, it is reasonable to suppose that its application is at least equally general, since no restriction is found in scripture.

But here, the opponents of pedobaptism would reply, such a restriction does really exist. Faith is often connected with baptism, and hence, say they, we may infer, that as baptism is a seal of *faith*, it cannot with propriety be administered to those who are unable to believe, as is the case with children. It is admitted that faith is in some passages connected with this ordinance, and therefore is necessary to all those who are capable of exercising it. But precisely the same was also the case with circumcision: Abraham "received the sign of circumcision as a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which *he had, yet being uncircumcised.*"[1] But, because circumcision required previous faith in adults, was it therefore inapplicable to children? Here then God himself teaches us, that the requisition in an adult, of a qualification of which children are incapable, is no proof that children shall be excluded from an ordinance of his church. How then should we venture, for such a reason, condemned by God himself, to deny baptism to children? It is a dictate of common sense, which all men observe, and the opponents of pedobaptism also in all cases except this, that any passage of scripture, requiring a qualification or action of which children are incapable, is intended to be applied only to adults. Thus, when the apostle says: "If any will not work, neither shall he eat;" do they infer that as children cannot work they shall be starved? When the Saviour utters these solemn

[1] Rom. 4: 11.

words: He that believeth not shall be damned, does the opponent say, children cannot believe, therefore they must be damned? No, he rationally affirms, "Children cannot work, or believe, and yet their inability to perform these requisites must not exclude them either from eating or from salvation. And, for the same reason, we add, their inability to believe forms no barrier to their baptism.

This entire mass of evidence, is rendered still more conclusive by the fact, that, according to the best light of the earliest Christian fathers, infant baptism was practised in the apostolic church; and from that to the present time it has been the prevailing practice of the great body of Christians.

Justin Martyr, who was born about the time of St. John's death, says, in his Apology, that among the members of the church in his day, "there were many of both sexes, some sixty, and some seventy years old, who were made disciples to Christ *in their infancy*." The word which he uses, (εμαθητευθησαν) is the very one used by the Saviour in his commission; "Go ye, and make disciples of all nations." It is evident therefore that Justin Martyr regarded the command of the Saviour as applicable to children.

Irenæus, a pupil of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John, was born about the close of the first century, and uses the following language:[1] "Christ came to save all those persons, who by him are *born again* unto God (renascuntur) infants and little ones, boys, youths and elder persons." Now it is certain,[2] that the word *renasci*, in the writings of Justin, Irenæus, and other early fathers, signifies *baptism*, so that none but baptized persons were ever termed "*regenerate*" by them.

The testimony of *Origen* is also very explicit and important. He was born only eighty-five years after St. John's death,

[1] Contra Haereses, L. II. ch. 22. § 4.

[2] See Storr's Biblical Theology, Vol. II. p. 304.

was a very learned man, descended of Christian parents, and knew the customs of the Christian church in his and the preceding age, as well as any man living. He says, *There was a tradition in the church, received from the apostles, that children also ought to be baptized. For those to whom the divine mysteries were entrusted, well knew, that the contaminations of sin were really found in all, which ought to be removed by water and the Spirit.*[1]

In the middle of the third century, the time when *Cyprian* flourished, there was a dispute whether baptism should always be deferred to the eighth day, in allusion to circumcision, or might be performed earlier. It was referred to a council of bishops in Africa, who unanimously decided against deferring infant baptism; but the propriety of the administration of the rite itself to infants was not disputed at all.

Augustine says: "*The whole church practises infant baptism; it was not instituted by councils, but was always in use,*" and states *that he never heard of any person either in the church or among the heretics, who denied the propriety of baptizing infants.*

And *Pelagius*, who was cotemporary with Augustine, and travelled in England, France, Italy, Africa and Palestine, though the denial of infant baptism would have favoured his doctrinal errors, strenuously maintained, "that he never heard of any one, even the most impious heretic, who asserted, that infants are not to be baptized." Is it probable that after travelling through all these countries, he would have remained ignorant of the fact, if there had existed any church which denied the propriety of this rite?

It is thus evident, that "during the *first four hundred years* from the formation of the Christian church, neither any society of men, nor any individual, denied the lawfulness of baptizing

[1] See his Comment. on Epist. to the Romans 6: 5—7. Tom. III. fol. 178. Paris 1512.

infants. Tertullian only urged some delay in the baptism of infants, and that not in all cases. And Gregory only deferred it perhaps to his own children. In the *next seven hundred years*, there was not a society nor an individual, who even pleaded its delay, much less any who denied the right or duty of infant baptism. In the year 1120 one sect rejected infant baptism, but it was opposed by the other churches as heretical, and soon came to nothing. From that time no one opposed the baptism of infants until the year 1522; since which time, also, the great body of the Christian church has continued to practise infant baptism.[1]"

IV. *The mode of applying water in Baptism.*

The controversy on this subject has always been regarded by the most enlightened divines, including Luther, Melancthon, and Chemnitz, as one of comparatively inferior importance. It has no connexion with the question of infant baptism; because churches which baptize by immersion, may and often do practise infant baptism (the Greek church); and those, who baptize by affusion or aspersion, may confine the ordinance to adults. The Augsburg Confession, therefore, whilst it distinctly enjoins the baptism of infants, specifies nothing as to the mode of applying the water. The question in dispute is not whether baptism by immersion is valid; this is admitted, though that mode is thought less suitable to a refined sense of moral feeling than the other. But the question is, whether immersion is enjoined in scripture, and consequently is *one essential part* of baptism, so that without it no baptism is valid, though it contain every other requisite. On this subject the Lutheran church has always agreed with the great majority of Christian denominations, in maintaining the negative, and in regarding the quantity of water

[1] See Lutheran Catechism, published by the General Synod, p. 19. 20.

employed in baptism, as well as the mode of exhibiting it, not essential to the validity of the ordinance. The argument may be briefly stated thus:

No circumstances can be necessary to the validity of a divine ordinance, excepting those which God has commanded in his word:

But God has not commanded immersion in his word;

Therefore, it is not necessary to the validity of the ordinance of baptism.

The first of these propositions is admitted by all Protestant denominations: and cannot be denied by any one, who does not hold the following absurd positions, a) that the word of God is an insufficient guide for man, b) That uninspired men may add to this revelation, and c) That whatever any uninspired men may choose to add, all other men must subsequently observe on pain of eternal perdition. The second proposition, therefore, alone needs investigation; namely, "that God has not commanded immersion in his word."

1. The friends of immersion do not contend, that there is any specific command; but allege, that the word "baptize" itself, does in the New Testament Greek, necessarily imply immersion. The fallacy of this opinion is evident from all the passages, in which the word is used in such a way as to throw light on its precise meaning.

a) Heb. 9: 10. Which (the Jewish service) stood (consisted) in meats and drinks and diverse baptisms (*βαπτισμοις.*) A reference to the Old Testament,[1] where these baptisms, or, as our English version renders it, washings, are described, proves that they were performed by sprinkling and pouring;

[1] Numb. 19: 18. And a clean person shall take a hyssop, and dip it in water, and *sprinkle* it upon the *tent*, and upon all the *vessels*, and upon the *persons* that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave, &c. So also verse 4. 13. 19. 20. 21.

but it is not mentioned in a single case, that the object must be put under the water.

b) Mark 7: 4. "And when they come from the market, except they wash (baptize themselves) they eat not:" Now it certainly was the custom of the Jews to wash their hands before eating, but what author ever contended that they entirely immersed themselves in water? Yet this application of water to a very small part of the body is called baptism. c) Again; "And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the *baptisms of cups and pots*, brazen *vessels* and of *tables* (*beds, couches, κλινη.*") The cups and pots might indeed be immersed in water, yet of this we are not certain. But will it be contended, that the beds or couches were carried to some often distant river to be immersed? or that every pharisee had a cistern provided in his yard for this purpose? It is therefore evident that many of the purifications, termed baptisms in the New Testament, were certainly performed by sprinkling, and (as in the case of the tables) by pouring; whilst it is not *certain* that they were performed by immersion in a single case. Hence there is much more scripture authority for sprinkling and pouring, than for immersion.

2. Nor do the circumstances, related in the New Testament as attendant on baptism, prove the *practice of immersion.*

a) The baptism of the three thousand converts,[1] on the day of Pentecost, was performed at *Jerusalem*, where there was no river or creek; at a *time*, when it was summer in Judea (close of March,) and rains were scarce, and the brook Kedron dry, and nothing remained near Jerusalem but the single pool of Siloam. How could the apostles, under these circumstances, have found places to baptize such a multitude in one day by immersion? Suppose, that the apostles went into the pool alternately, relieving each other, and one was constantly engaged

[1] Acts 2:

in the act of baptizing, it is utterly impossible, that the three thousand could have been baptized in a day. But a large part of the day had elapsed before the baptisms began: the effusion of the Holy Spirit, their preaching to persons from different countries, in their own languages, the accusations against the apostles, Peter's defence from the scriptures, the convictions of multitudes and their inquiries what they must do to be saved,—all these things had occurred beforehand, so that, at earliest, the work of baptizing did not begin before noon. Admitting that the six remaining hours of the day were all devoted to this business, and that by frequent changes one of the twelve was incessantly in the act of baptizing, he would have to baptize five hundred persons in one hour, or *eighty three every minute* or upwards of *eight every second!!* Or suppose, what is indeed very improbable, and *contrary to the tenour of the narrative of Luke*, that when the work of baptizing had been resolved on, the apostles divided the whole multitude into twelve equal parts, and each one, at the head of his division, marching straightway in quest of some bath house or cistern, all spent the remainder of the day laboriously engaged in this work; would it not still be impossible that they should have baptized that number? An hour at least would be consumed in dividing the multitude and inquiring for the baths, in repairing to them and placing them in order. Can it be believed, that each apostle could have baptized two hundred and fifty in five hours, averaging very nearly *one for every minute* of the whole time, even if they were all standing naked, ready to leap in as soon as the apostle could lay his hands on them. But surely it will not be contended that all these persons of different sexes bathed naked in each other's presence. Yet where could the three thousand suddenly have found bathing dresses? And to bathe with their ordinary clothes on would have been certain disease or death to multitudes of them. Is it not infinitely more reasonable to believe, that the multitudes remained together, and, after hav-

ing been baptized by sprinkling according to the Jewish custom (Numb. 19: 18.) which could have been done in less than an hour, continued to listen to the words of eternal life?

b) The language of Peter, when he baptized the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, does not favour immersion. When they believed and received the Holy Ghost, Peter said, "Can any *man forbid water*, that these should not be baptized?" that is, forbid water to be brought. Had he intended to baptize them by immersion it would have been much more natural for him to say, "Can any man forbid us to go out to the water, and baptize these."

c) The circumstances of the Jailor's baptism, Acts 16: 19—39. imply that he was not baptized by immersion. He was baptized *in the night*, when it would have been very inconvenient to go to a suitable place for immersion. The rite was evidently performed in the principal *room of the prison*; for nothing is said of their leaving the house, we are only told that they had been thrust into the dungeon or inner prison, and that they were brought out of that apartment to where the family of the Jailor were, whom they taught. And when he professed his faith, we are told he was baptized immediately, not, he immediately started off with his family and with Paul and Silas, in the night, to a suitable place to be immersed.

d) Matth. 3: 16. When Jesus was baptized of John in the Jordan, "he went up straightway out of the water:" and Acts 8: 38, "They (the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip) went down both *into the water*, and he baptized him." In these passages the prepositions εις and απο, may with equal propriety be rendered *to* and *from*. Thus the former is translated in John's gospel,[1] "John came first *to* (εις) the sepulchre" of our Lord, "but he went *not in*;" and again "He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden *to* (εις) the wedding

[1] John 20: 4. 5.

(least)"[1] and many other passages :[2] and the latter is thus rendered in the passages, "And forthwith the angel departed *from* (απο) him,"[3] and "The angel came and rolled the stone *from* (απο) the door,"[4] and others.[5] These prepositions do, therefore, not with certainty prove any thing more, than that these persons went *to* the water to be baptized, and afterwards came *from* it. But even if it were certain, that they went into the water, this would by no means determine the manner in which they were baptized. They might have gone in to the depth of their ancles or knees, and baptized according to the Jewish baptism, described in Numbers,[6] by pouring the water on with a vessel, or with the hand, or by sprinkling it over the subject.

e) Nor does the fact, that "John baptized in Ænon, because there was much water (πολλα ὑδατα, many springs) there," determine the mode of baptism. Because whatever be the object, sacred or profane, for which large multitudes assemble, to spend one or more days together, it is a notorious fact, that the vicinity of a spring or creek or river is always preferred, for water is indispensably necessary to their subsistence. Are not such places always preferred for fourth of July orations, military parades and camp meetings; yet who would infer that the methodists baptize by immersion, because they hold their camp meetings in the vicinity of water? And as thousands followed John, what is more natural, than that he should select a place where there was abundance of water for their subsistence. Indeed, at no other place could such crowds remain with him more than half a day, or even that long, in the warm season. Moreover, we

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[1] John 2: 3.

[2] John 4: 5. Then cometh he to (εις) the city. Acts 13: 48. 21: 4. Rom. 2: 4.

[3] Acts 12: 10.

[4] Matth. 28: 2.

[5] Matth. 4: 25. 24: 31. 28: 8.

[6] Chap. 19.

are told that there were "many waters" at Ænon. Now it is geographically certain, that there are neither many rivers nor many creeks at any of the supposed sites of Ænon, for its location is not fully ascertained. At most, then, there were several springs there; but are springs the most suitable places for immersion? Certainly not.

f) The texts Rom. 6: 4. and Col. 2: 12, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death," appear to refer not to the mode of baptism, but to the spiritual obligations which that ordinance imposes; it requires us to be *dead* to the world, buried to all earthly and sinful pursuits, growing together with him spiritually, "planted" or grafted on him. What reason is there to suppose that one of these figures refers to the mode of baptism rather than the other in the same sentence? And what mode of baptism, would be indicated by being "planted together with Christ by baptism?" Or what mode by putting on Christ like a garment.[1]

g) 1 Cor. 15: 29. "Else what shall they do who are baptized for (ὑπερ,) or *over* the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" The signification of this passage is somewhat obscure. Tertullian, Theophilact and Epiphanius inform us, that it was the custom of the Marcionites and Corinthians, if a catechumen died before his baptism, to baptize some other in his stead, as the apostle here seems to intimate. And as the early Christians regarded with much veneration the graves of martyrs, and occasionally held assemblies on the spot, it is supposed that in these vicarious baptisms, the rite was performed *over* his grave. This would be the obvious meaning of the apostle, if his language (ὑπερ) in this passage signifies *over*, as it certainly often does in Greek writers. But could the baptisms *over* the graves of martyrs be performed by immersion? Were their graves dug at the bottom of rivers?

[1] Gal. 3: 27.

h) The moral unsuitableness of immersing both sexes even with bathing dresses before a promiscuous community, especially in countries where bathing is seldom practised, renders it highly improbable, that it would form a part of the pure system of gospel religion. Christianity was designed for universal dissemination, and, therefore,

i) Finally, *the danger to the life and health* of those, who should be thus baptized, in the winter season, and especially in the colder climates of the earth, renders it a very unsuitable part of a universal religion. The ministers of Christ are no where directed to defer the administration of this ordinance till the summer arrives, nor are they authorized to make an exception in the case of the most confirmed invalids, whose very life would be in jeopardy.

From all these considerations, we think, our second position is clearly established, that God has not commanded immersion in his word: yea it is clear that the scriptures contain more evidence for sprinkling and pouring, than for immersion; hence our conclusion follows incontrovertibly, that it is not a necessary part of the ordinance, yea that sprinkling and pouring are preferable to it.

IV. Its Advantages.

The advantages connected with this ordinance of God, which are numerous and highly important, may be reduced to the following heads:

1. The *peculiar privileges of membership* in the visible church of Christ, such as, a) the means of regular instruction from the *preaching of God's* word, and the private labours of the pastor; b) The society of professed followers of Christ, whose example and exhortations, if they be such as Christ commanded, will afford to the young convert sensible aid in his journey toward the land of bliss. It is, indeed, to be regretted,

that the example of many professors of religion in all ages and churches, has been little, if any more instructive, than that of the world. But, who, that has ever dwelt in a church, where the standard of piety was duly elevated, and professors of religion were, as they ever ought to be, a peculiar people; adorning their profession by a well ordered life and conversation; distinguished for their zeal in the conversion of souls, and their enterprize and liberality in advancing the several religious and benevolent associations of the day; who, we say, that has dwelt among such a people, did not feel that he breathed a peculiar atmosphere, that he was surrounded by men whose treasure was in heaven, and whose hearts were fast ripening to be there also?

c) They enjoy the advantages resulting from *church discipline.* It is the duty of every association of Christians to watch over the purity of its members, and, if a brother is found wandering from the footsteps of the Saviour, to exhort, admonish and censure him; that he may become sensible of his aberrations and return to his forsaken God. If all this avail not, he is to be publicly suspended from the communion of the church, and thus receive the official declaration of his former brethren, that, in their judgment, he is on the downward road to everlasting death. If any thing can rouse the backsliding sinner, who is fast sinking into the arms of endless death, it is these several measures of discipline, performed in the true spirit of Christian affection.

It is thus, in the ordinances of his own appointment, that

> "When any turn from Zion's way,
> As numbers often do;"
> We hear the blessed "Saviour say:"
> "Wilt thou forsake me too?

And although the latter stages of this discipline are painful to those on whom they fall; what Christian, that feels aright the importance of salvation, and the proneness of his soul to wander from the God he loves, is not filled with gratitude to the great

Physician of souls, that in case of necessity, even this severe remedy will be applied to rescue him from hell?

The subjects of infant baptism, like those of circumcision, must naturally enter on the enjoyment of these privileges by degrees, as the powers of their minds are developed. Yet does their participation in them commence in their earliest years, as soon as they are capable of being assembled for instruction by their pastor; whilst the unbaptized are not necessarily, nor by virtue of any positive institution, brought under such influence at any particular age during their intellectual minority, nor afterwards until they apply for admission to church-membership. The children of the church are regarded as, in some sense, under the religious supervision of the church, and in our Formula of church government,[1] it is expressly enjoined on pastors, to instruct them in the elementary principles of religion, and on the church council[1] to exert themselves to provide suitable and religiously conducted schools, to which they may be sent, They are thus early informed of their relation to the church, and of their obligation at a reasonable age personally to assume, and publicly to *confirm* the promises, made for them at their baptism. Thus, in a well regulated church, the great subject of embracing Christ is necessarily brought before the minds of all those who had been baptized in infancy; presented too in the most solemn and direct manner, commended by the strong influence of religious education, of filial attachment, and of early associations; whilst a very small proportion of those, who grow up without the pales of the church, are ever placed under such advantageous circumstances.

And, should the little immortals, who were dedicated to God by baptism, take their speedy flight into another world soon after they have alighted in this, and never become capable of receiving any instruction; there is this peculiarity attend-

1 Chap. IV. § 10.

ing them, that they have in God's appointed way been *brought within the pales of covenanted hope*, have received the seal of membership in God's visible people, and are in exactly the same state, into which, by divine command, the offspring of Jewish parents under the Old Testament dispensation were brought by circumcision.

2. Baptism furnishes its subject with *new motives to piety*, to adults immediately, and to others as soon as they reach the years of discretion. a) The very solemnities of the baptismal act itself, cannot fail to make a deep impression on its attentive adult subject; and their subsequent recollection, as well as the instructions given to the rising generation on their early dedication to God by this ordinance, must tend to cherish holy feelings, and prompt to holy action. b) The fact too, that the eyes of the world are now fixed upon the professor of religion to detect his foibles, appeals, if not to a noble, yet certainly to a very powerful principle of human action; whilst the higher reflection on his Master's injunction to let his light shine before others, that they may be induced to glorify the God of his salvation, prompts him from more exalted motives to walk worthy of his holy and heavenly calling. c) The adult subjects of baptism also feel, that their obligation of obedience to God, is no longer based on the mere fitness of the thing itself, and the relations which they naturally sustain to him as their creator, preserver, redeemer, and judge. They are held by the additional bond of a covenant voluntarily and deliberately entered into by themselves.

3. Another advantage of baptism is, to the sincere adult subject, *the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit.*

This is evident from the fact, a) that truth is exhibited in baptism, and the influence of the Spirit in a greater or less degree, always accompanies the sincere use of the truth.

b) Because baptism is represented as a means of regeneration, it is termed "the washing of regeneration;" and yet it

is admitted, that regeneration is effected by the Holy Spirit through the means. c) Baptism is in strong and explicit terms, represented as a means to attain the pardon of sin; and it is not reasonable to suppose, that an ordinance, which, when faithfully attended to, exerts so important an influence on the relations of its subject to his God, should make no other impression on the soul of the sinner himself than what results from the mere (logico-moral) efficacy of the truths exhibited by it. d) The agency of the Spirit is distinctly associated with baptism by the Saviour himself.[1] e) The same doctrine is also expressly taught in other passages of scripture.[2]

What immediate influence is exerted on the infant subject, or whether any, it is difficult to determine; yet, when arrived at years of discretion, he faithfully meditates on his relations by baptism, no reason can be assigned why all the enumerated blessings should not be his.

4. And finally the Scriptures expressly represent baptism as a means for obtaining the remission of sins.[3]

The precise nature of the connexion between this ordinance and the pardon of our transgressions, is not explained in the sacred volume; and views of it somewhat diverse are entertained

[1] John 3: 5. Verily I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

[2] Tit. 3: 5. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration *and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.* Gal. 3: 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, *have put on Christ.* 1 Pet. 3: 21. Rom. 13: 14.

[3] Acts 22: 16. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be *baptized* and *wash away your sins.* Gal. 3: 27—29. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ—and, if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. 1 Cor. 6: 11. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. Ephes. 5: 26. That he (Christ) might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the *washing of water by the word.* Rom. 6: 3, 6. Col. 2: 11, 12, 13.

by different divines. It is evident that in each event, the sincerity of the adult subject must be regarded as essential to any such result. And as in this case, baptism is the public profession of the surrender of the heart to God, and of the subject's determination to live in conformity to his heavenly Master's will, it would imply in all such subjects, a moral fitness to receive the divine blessing; would be a virtual entrance into that covenant, in which God promises to be their God, and they bind themselves to be his obedient people.

Hence, baptism is not, like faith, an appointed condition, the performance of which is invariably followed by immediate pardon: but like prayer, it is a means of grace, the proper use of which is ever acceptable to God, secures to its subject all the spiritual blessings which he is qualified to receive, and thus also conduces sooner or later to the remission of his sins.

Administered to the careless, unawakened sinner, it is a mere mockery of God, and cannot fail to incur the divine displeasure.

4. Another very important advantage of baptism is doubtless found in that particular *course of instruction* which especially in the Lutheran church always antecedes the baptism of adults, and succeeds that of infants, on their arrival at a proper age for a public and personal profession of religion, by the *confirmation* of their baptismal vows. The nature of this instruction will be explained under the head of *confirmation*, to which subject we are now naturally conducted.

Confirmation, or personal Profession of Religion on admission to Sacramental Communion.

The mode of admission to sacramental communion in the Lutheran church is somewhat peculiar, and has often been misunderstood. In our remarks on this subject we shall have reference to the church in the United States, and especially to the standards of government and discipline published by the General

Synod. We are strongly attached to this practice from our own experience of its blessed effects, as well as from the intrinsic evidence of its salutary tendency; and shall be much mistaken if any who impartially weigh the following statements, can object to its observance.

1. *The course of instruction preparatory to Confirmation.*

Once a year, and as much oftener as circumstances may render proper, it is the custom of Lutheran[1] ministers publicly to appoint a meeting with those persons who have a desire to apply for sacramental privileges. The day selected is usually two or three months prior to the approaching communion season. The persons particularly invited to attend this meeting are, first, those who have been awakened to a sense of their sinfulness and danger, who desire to take up their cross and follow the Redeemer: and, secondly, those, who having been admitted to visible membership in their infancy, have attained the age when it is their duty publicly to profess the religion of Jesus before the church and the world, by *confirming* or taking upon themselves the vows made for them at their baptism in infancy. Prior to this meeting, the pastor endeavours to visit all the awakened souls in his congregation, as also those families, in which he knows there are some members of suitable age for sacramental privileges. If, in these visits, the interrogatory be propounded to him by some anxious parent: What shall I do—my son, or my daughter has no desire to meet with you? We would reply, persuade and require them to attend the instruction; for you are commanded to bring up your offspring in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But let the minister also distinctly inform the parents and catechumens, and publicly announce it to the congregation, that attendance on this instruction

1 The practice of the German Reformed church, very much resembles that of the Lutherans, on this subject.

will by no means make it obligatory, or even proper for them to approach the sacred board; unless the course of instruction is the means of awakening their souls and leading them to an entire dedication of themselves to God for time and eternity. Nay, according to the Formula of Government and Discipline,[1] no church council can with propriety admit persons of a different character.

The appointed day finds the pastor and catechumens (for thus are those termed who attend) assembled in the church or lecture room. Every meeting is opened by singing and prayer, and closed by an address to the throne of grace. The time of the first meeting is chiefly occupied by the pastor in explaining the object of the contemplated course of instruction in as solemn and impressive a manner as possible. This object he states to be, *not* merely committing the catechism to memory, or acquiring doctrinal knowledge. For what would all this profit, if the heart remained unaffected, the life unchanged. The devils possess more doctrinal knowledge than the most eminent Christians, but remain devils still. Nor is the object contemplated merely admission to the Lord's table. Judas probably reclined with the Master at the sacred board, and yet betrayed him: and Paul tells us, that many others ate and drank judgment to themselves. But, says the zealous pastor, who feels the eternal importance of this solemn occasion, The object is to show you in so plain and simple a manner, that you cannot fail to understand it, the natural depravity of your hearts, your habitual and base rebellion against your best benefactor, your father and your God, and your danger of being shut out forever from his blissful presence: To show you, that you must be born again, or be eternally excluded from the kingdom of heaven; and to give you such instructions and directions from day to day as will, if faithfully pursued,

[1] Chap. IV. § V.

sooner or later certainly eventuate in the conversion of your souls to God. Yea, if ye will now but seek the Lord sincerely and perseveringly, ye shall find him; for him that cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out. Further he tells them, if you would seek the Lord aright, you must *surrender your heart* to him, that is, a) form a resolution, that in the strength of God, you will from this moment indulge in no known sin, and will endeavour to discharge all your known duty. b) Again, when you go hence, meditate much and attentively on the solemn facts you have heard, and examine your heart in regard to them. e) Retire to your closet or some other suitable place, and with the utmost sincerity pour out your soul in prayer to God. If your heart is cold, and you feel no concern about your salvation, let this very indifference on so momentous a matter be the subject of your confession to God, and beseech him to deliver you from this dangerous condition. d) Resolve that you will continue thus to seek him, by watchfulness, meditation and frequent prayer, not only daily so long as the course of instruction continues, but so long as you live; and that if God should suffer your soul to remain in darkness until your final hour, you will die a praying sinner.

The time of every future meeting is taken up partly by plain, practical, conversational lectures, and partly by examinations of the catechumens on the fundamental doctrines of the scriptures. In the former the pastor passes over, in regular and successive portions, the entire subject of experimental religion, very much after the manner of Doddridge, in his "Rise and Progress of Religion in the soul;" illustrating the subject by facts drawn from his own experience and observation, and investing it with the utmost possible practical interest by occasional introduction of the peculiar circumstances, temptations and encouragements of his catechumens. For each such exercise the pious pastor will prepare his own mind by the same devotional exercises of the closet, as for the public duties of the sacred desk. To such

deliberate and conscientious preparation, he will find himself urged by his annual and accumulating experience, that the good effected by him will be very much graduated by the solemnity and interest which he has brought his own mind to feel on the subject. The writer would here recommend to his younger brethren a practice, on which experience has taught him to place a high value, namely, themselves to read a chapter in that invaluable work of Dr. Doddridge prior to each meeting with their catechumens, and by careful premeditation to prepare themselves for the introduction above referred to, of the peculiar circumstances of those whom they are labouring to conduct to the Redeemer's arms. And having assumed the work of recommendation, he would respectfully submit to his ministerial brethren generally, the propriety of enjoining it on all their catechumens acquainted with the English language to procure and daily to make a faithful use of that excellent little volume, the "Catechumen's and Communicant's Companion." Such a work has long been considered a desideratum amongst us, and the church is much indebted to the young brother, who has so successfully supplied it.[1]

In the doctrinal instructions, the scriptures and the catechism are made the basis: portions of which are committed to memory by those catechumens who are able, on which the pastor makes such explanatory remarks as he deems necessary. Sometimes he calls on one of the catechumens to make the closing prayer, if he regards any of them as spiritually qualified for this duty.

[1] The author of this work is the Rev. Mr. Morris, one of the alumni of the Theological Seminary of this place. It is executed with much spirit, simplicity and devotion; and is a happy imitation of the manner of our best German devotional works. It indeed contains all that the young inquiring sinner needs, except a few meditations, embodying more specifically than is done, the nature, progress and evidences of that great change of heart, which it is the grand object of this course of instruction to effect. With this addition, it would supercede the necessity of any additional book for that occasion, and be a standing and standard work for the church.

Sometimes he may address himself to some individual by name, and hear from him the state of his heart, and his progress in the great work of seeking salvation. Many of our pastors regard it as a duty thus to converse with each catechumen, either in the presence of all, or by daily detaining a few for this purpose, after the others have been dismissed.

Such is the course of instruction substantially pursued by the great mass of our divines, with the variations which the habits and predilections of each may dictate, and the exercise of which the principles of christian liberty, so highly prized, and so fully enjoyed in the Lutheran church, secure to all: yet has it not unfrequently been the theme of invidious clamour to the illiterate enthusiast, and of animadversion from others better informed. But we have never heard, nor do we expect ever to hear, of a single truly pious pastor, who faithfully attended to this instruction, and did not regard it as a highly blessed means of bringing souls to Christ. By unconverted ministers, this duty, like all others, will be performed as a mere formality, and confer little benefit on those who attend on it. But in the hands of the great mass of our pastors, it is nothing else than a series of meetings for prayer, singing, exhortation and individual personal interview, between them and those who profess a concern for salvation; in which, without adopting the novel nomenclature of the day, they can enjoy all the facilities and afford to their hearers all the benefits aimed at, and doubtless often attained by others, in what are termed anxious meetings, inquiry meetings, class meetings, private conferences, &c. &c. Indeed, the friends of this good old custom are delighted to see the several sister denominations, under different appellations, adopting the substance of the same thing; nor do we care by what name the thing is known, so that God is glorified, and sinners are saved.

II. *The vote of the church council.*

When this course of instruction has been concluded, the church council is invited to attend with the pastor on an appointed day, for the purpose of examining the applicants for sacramental communion; and either admitting or rejecting them. This meeting has usually been held in the church, in the presence of the whole congregation; but such entire publicity is unfavourable to free and confidential interview with the catechumens, and has in many cases converted this exercise into a mere general examination on the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion. The writer cannot refrain from expressing his decided preference for the practice of those brethren, who hold this final meeting in the Lecture-room or school-house, in the presence of the Church council alone, and there enter into an individual and personal examination of the applicants on the momentous subject of their own evidences of personal piety. Such is manifestly the nature of the duty contemplated by our Formula of church government. Chap. IV. § 5. "It shall be the duty of the council to admit to membership adults, who make application, and whom *on mature examination*, they shall judge to be possessed of the qualifications hereafter specified. They shall be obedient subjects of divine grace, that is, they must either be genuine Christians, or satisfy the church council that they are sincerely endeavouring to become such. Also to admit to communion of the church, all those who were admitted to church-membership in their infancy, and whom on *like examination*, they shall judge possessed of the above-mentioned qualifications. No one shall be considered a fit subject for confirmation, who has not previously attended a course of religious lectures, delivered by the pastor on the most important doctrines and principles of religion; unless the pastor should be satisfied that the applicant's attainments are adequate without this attendance." How can the requisitions of this clause be

considered as satisfied by a general examination of the catechumens, on the attainments they have made in the knowledge of Christian doctrine and duties?

III. *Public profession of religion before the whole church.*

After the examination of applicants has been closed, and their cases decided by the council, those who have been admitted are required to make a public profession of the religion of Jesus Christ before the whole church, by *confirming*, or taking on themselves the vows of dedication to God, made for them at their baptism in infancy.

Should there be among the catechumens any, who had not been baptized in infancy, they are required to make precisely the same public profession as a prerequisite to their baptism, which is performed prior to the confirmation of the others. And as this profession is thus in the first instance made by themselves, and in adult age, the *confirmation* or personal assumption of it by them would seem to be superfluous, although no perceptible evil could result from their being *confirmed* along with the rest, as has in some few instances been done.

After the catechumens have made the public profession of the religion of Christ, they all kneel around the altar, when the minister implores upon them the blessing of God, in a brief ejaculatory prayer, passing from one to the other, and successively imposing his hands on the head of each.

The imposition of hands, although generally practised, is not regarded by us as an essential part of this public ceremony, nor do we attribute to the whole ordinance any other than a moral influence.

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among us may therefore be defined, a solemn mode of admitting to sacramental communion, those who were baptized in their infancy. What we regard as essential in it, is practised by all Christian denominations, which require a profession of religion before admission to sacramental communion. The circumstances peculiar to us, viz. the antecedent course of instruction, the *public* profession before the whole congregation, and the individual prayer of the pastor with his hand on the head of each catechumen, experience has taught us to regard as happily calculated to heighten the intense solemnity of the occasion, and fix on the heart of each individual the indelible impression, that he is now consecrated to God, whilst they are all perfectly consonant with the spirit of the gospel, and sanctioned by the example of the earlier ages of the Christian church.

If it be asked what authority can we allege for these peculiarities, we reply, that the special *course of instruction* to catechumens is of very ancient date. When Christianity was first published, all who professed sincerely to believe, that Jesus was the only Redeemer of the human family, and pledged themselves to lead a holy life, were immediately received to baptism and the Lord's table, and were afterwards more fully instructed. Subsequently, however, when churches were every where established, all those who determined to abandon heathenism, and attach themselves to the Christian church, were first received into the ranks of the catechumens, in order that they might be instructed in the doctrines of the Christian faith, and as Origen tells us,[1] "that they might give demonstrations of the reality of their intentions, by the change of their lives, and holiness of their conversations." The term of continuance in the state of catechumens, differed at different places, from forty days to three years.[2] It is true this instruction seems

[1] Contra Celsum, l. 4. p. 142. ed. Cantabr. 1677.

[2] Baumgarten's Erlœuterungen der christlichen Alterthümer, p. 218.

first to have been instituted for those adult heathen who embraced Christianity, but it was afterwards extended to such as had been baptized in infancy, and certainly with as manifest propriety in the one case as in the other.

As to the *public* profession of religion before the whole church instead of before the church council or session, though it may require more self denial, it certainly tends to impress more deeply the mind of the catechumen himself, whilst it draws the line of distinction more clearly between him and the world.

The *imposition of hands* with the accompanying blessing, which seems to have been originally intended by the term confirmation, was introduced about the close of the second century, after the distinction between presbyters and diocesan bishops had sprung up in the church. The bishop claimed the right of authenticating or confirming the baptism of all those who had been baptized by mere presbyters or deacons. If the bishop was present, the confirmation or ratification took place immediately after the baptism; if not, it was deferred till the next convenient season. It was believed, that baptism effected remission of sins, and that the bishop by the imposition of hands conferred those gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were requisite for living a holy life. This rite has sometimes been considered as a continuation of a practice somewhat similar, of which a few cases are related in Scripture.[1] It is indeed evident, that the design and effect of

[1] Acts 8: 14—17. When the apostles, who were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For as yet, he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. *Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.* Acts 19: 1—6. And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus. And finding certain disciples, he said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said

the imposition of hands described in the annexed passages, was the communication of miraculous gifts, which have confessedly long since ceased. But there is another passage,[1] in which the apostle Paul speaks of "the laying on of the hands" as among the "principles," or elementary things, belonging to Christianity. And as no other rite has descended from the apostolic church, to which the apostle could possibly allude, it is inferred by some, that although the imposition of hands was first designed to confer the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, it was continued after those miraculous powers had ceased, as a suitable mode of imploring the divine blessing on those, who were to be admitted to the sacred board. It appears that this rite was early encumbered by superstitious ceremonies, such as the chrism or anointing the candidate with oil, sealing him with the cross, and directing him to taste milk and honey. In process of time, confirmation was erected into a sacrament, in the Roman Catholic church, and entirely separated from baptism. At the commencement of the Reformation, the old Roman Catholic rite with its appendages, was abolished, though subsequently the course of instruction, the public profession, and the imposition of hands were retained by the Lutheran and Reformed churches of Continental Europe, and the Episcopal church of England, as a solemn method of admitting members to full communion. The Apology to the Augsburg Confession contains the follow-

unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is on Jesus Christ. When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul *laid his hands upon them* the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.

[1] Heb. 6: 1. 2. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms and *the laying on of hands*, and of resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

ing declaration on this subject: *Confirmation is a rite which was transmitted to us from the fathers, but which the church never regarded as essential to salvation; for it is not supported by a divine command.*[1] The illustrious Calvin was also favourable to this rite, although his followers in this country seem differently inclined. "It was, (says he)[2] an ancient custom, that the children of Christian parents, when they were grown up, should be presented to the bishop, to do that office which was required of persons, who were baptized at adult age. Forasmuch as that being baptized in infancy, they could not then make any confession of their faith before the church, they were again brought by their parents before the bishop and examined by him in the catechism, which they had then in a certain form of words. And that this act, which ought to be grave and sacred, might have the greater reverence, the ceremony of the imposition of hands was used in the exercise of it. So the youth, after their faith was approved, were dismissed with a solemn benediction." Soon after, he adds: "Such an imposition of hands as this, which is used purely as a blessing, *I very much approve of, and wish it were now restored to its pure and primitive uses.*" Commenting on the passage in Hebrews above referred to, "he considers it as abundantly proving, that the origin of confirmation was from the apostles," meaning, as we learn from the context of the above quotations, not that it was commanded by the apostles as a perpetual rite, but merely that it originated in their practice of the imposition of hands.[3]

There is certainly nothing in the nature of confirmation itself, which was designed to make its subjects members of one particular denomination rather than of another; for, at the time

[1] Formula Concordiæ, p. 201. Confirmatio (et extrema unctio) sunt ritus accepti a Patribus, quos ne ecclesia quidem tanquam necessarios ad salutem requirit, quid non habent mandatum Dei.

[2] Institutes, lib. 4. cap. 1.

[3] White's Lectures, p. 140. 141.

of its introduction, the Christian church had not yet been divided into different sects on the ground of doctrinal diversity. And it is obvious, that baptism made its subject a member of the particular church of that town or place, in which he was baptized; and that subsequently his membership in any particular church was decided by his habitual attendance and worship with it. Children were always numbered with that church in which their parents, sponsors, or those with whom they lived, worshipped. Yet confirmation may very aptly now be regarded as implying the preference of its subject for the particular denomination in which he receives it; although on the strict principles of scriptural church government, his actual membership in any church, must be decided by the same circumstances now as in the days of the apostles.

ARTICLE X.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

In regard to the Lord's Supper they teach, that the body and blood of Christ are actually present under the emblems of bread and wine; and are dispensed to the communicants.

The ordinance to which this article refers, is confessedly the most solemn and impressive appointed by the Saviour in his visible church on earth. It was designed as a memorial of his dying love, and in whatever light we view it, it is adapted with

infinite wisdom to its intended end. Is Christianity a religion, whose truth and cardinal features require our belief of the fundamental facts of the Saviour's history? this ordinance, of such frequent recurrence, is wisely adapted to confer incessant prominence on the most important of them, his atoning death for the sins of men. Is Christianity a religion requiring the affections of the heart, as well as the assent of the understanding? What ordinance could be better adapted to call forth the tenderest feelings of the soul than that, which in language of the deepest solemnity, and by emblems familiar to all of every rank and nation, and amid circumstances of melancholy, midnight gloom, exhibits the suffering Saviour as it were to our eyes? In all churches of commendable spirituality, the celebration of this ordinance is accompanied by peculiar practical exercises. These consist in one or more preparatory services on the previous day; and if convenient, a neighbouring brother is invited to assist the stated pastor. It is a season of deep heart-searching, of self-abasement, of penitence and renewed dedication of the soul to God; and we may well ask, what Christian has sincerely and devoutly waited on the Lord in this ordinance, and not found his strength renewed; has not realized the truth of the Saviour's promise, "my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed?"[1]

I. The names,

By which this ordinance is designated, are various. It is termed the *Lord's Supper*,[2] The *Lord's Table*,[3] *Communion*,[4] *Eucharist*, *Sacrament of the Altar*, &c.

II. The institution

Of this ordinance is admitted to be divine by all Christians. It

[1] John 6: 55.

[2] κυριακον δειπνον. 1 Cor. 11: 20.

[3] 10: 21.

[4] 10: 16. 17.

took place in that solemn night, in which the Saviour was betrayed, during the paschal supper.[1]

It may not be amiss for the reader to know, that in regard to this ordinance as well as baptism, there existed customs among the ancients calculated to throw some light upon it. Many of the ancient nations accompanied their sacrifices with feasts in honour of their gods. Moses and Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders, went up and saw the God of Israel, and "*did eat and drink.*"[2] Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and did eat bread with his brethren.[3] It was prescribed in the Levitical service, that the flesh of the sacrifices should be eaten under certain restrictions. But the principal feast of this kind was that of the paschal supper, instituted by God at once to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage and from the destroying angel, and to prefigure the atoning death of the Messiah.[4] A religious feast therefore in commemoration of some important event, was nothing new to the disciples, and they could find no difficulty in understanding the import of that now instituted by their Master.

The obligation to celebrate this ordinance is inculcated by the express words of the institution: do this in remembrance of me.

The Society of Friends, who in regard to their moral deportment are truly exemplary, at present alone deny the obligation of Christians to observe this rite, regarding it as designed by the

[1] Matth. 26: 26. And *as they were eating* Jesus took bread and blessed it and break it, and gave it to the disciples and said, take, eat, this is my body: (Luke and Paul add) which is given (broken) for you; this do in remembrance of me. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

[2] Exod. 24: 11.

[3] Gen. 31: 54.

[4] Exod. 12.

Saviour merely to inculcate the necessity of *spiritual* union with him. That they err, is evident from the specific nature of the command, "*do this* in remembrance of me," from the direction of Paul thus to "show forth his death *till he come*," [1] from the fact that these same disciples did habitually observe this rite, that the whole Christian church did in the apostolic age, and subsequently, and still does, with the exception of the society here referred to, which took its rise in England, about the middle of the 17th century, and a few others.[2]

III. The nature and design of this sacrament.

1. *The external elements*, to be used in this ordinance, are *bread* and *wine*. Our Saviour doubtless used unleavened bread, for no other was permitted to be in a Jewish family during the passover. But the disciples evidently afterwards used the leavened bread, which had been provided for the ordinary purposes of life. The kind of bread is therefore immaterial to the validity of the ordinance; as also is its form, and the circumstance of its having been broken or not. It is uncertain what *kind* of wine was used by the Saviour, and therefore any species would answer the purpose. The Abyssinian Christians, who had no wine, used their liquor nearest resembling it, termed *hydromel*. It is however absolutely necessary that the wine be given to every communicant as well as the bread;

a) Because the Saviour gave both. b) All the members of the Corinthian church received both.[3] c) It was the uniform custom of the whole Christian church during the first ten centuries. d) Paul says we have all been made to *drink* into one Spirit.[4]

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[1] 1 Cor. 11: 26.

[2] The Paulicians, some Socinians and fanatics also dispute it.

[3] 1 Cor. 11: 26. 10: 21.

[4] 1 Cor. 12: 13. comp. 11: 26.

2. *These elements must be consecrated* by prayer: because it was done by our Saviour, and seems to be a necessary part of a *religious* rite. The consecration may be performed by the repetition of the words of the institution, as was done by the Latin churches, or by a special prayer, imploring the Spirit of God to sanctify the elements, for the intended use, as is done by Greek Christians. In the Lutheran church either method is deemed valid, and both are oftentimes combined. The persons who may officiate at the administration of this ordinance are the authorized ministers of Christ, who act in the stead of their divine Master.

3. The a) *cardinal design of the ordinance is doubtless mnemonic or commemorative.* It is to be performed in "*remembrance* of" the Saviour, and to *shew forth his death until he come.*[1] By this ordinance Christians are not only to be reminded of the Saviour in general, but particularly of his ignominious death upon the cross, as an atonement for the sins of the world, and of the gracious plan of salvation based on his death. b) The participation of this ordinance, is also a public *profession of faith in Jesus Christ.* c) Another object of this ordinance is, to promote *unity* and *brotherly love* among Christians. This is expressly taught by Paul,[2] who also censures the abuses of the Corinthian church, which violated this design.[3]

4. The *practical influence* of this ordinance on the Christian, is indeed incalculable. By it his *views* of the great plan of salvation through the merits of a crucified Saviour are kept fundamentally correct. So long as he retains this belief, he cannot sanction the opinions of those, who regard the Saviour's

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[1] 1 Cor. 11: 26.

[2] 1 Cor. 10: 17. We, being many, are one bread and one body: *for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

[3] 1 Cor. 11: 20—22.

death as a mere attestation of his sincerity, or of the truth of the doctrines taught by him: nor can his soul find pleasure in those, who fritter away the gospel scheme into a mere code of morality, and send man upon the ground of his own "filthy" righteousness, to claim justification at the bar of God. Hence it cherishes in us a healthful sense of our own sinfulness, inability to fulfil the law, and of the height and depth and length and breadth of that surpassing love of God, which induced him to exchange the hallelujahs of angels for the curses of men, the throne of heaven for the malefactor's cross, and the diadem of glory for a crown of thorns.

The *feelings* accompanying these views he finds to be of the most salutary kind. Humble penitence for the sins which crucified the Lord of glory, ardent gratitude for this amazing display of his benevolence, and sincere love to him as "the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely," as that divine being in whom all excellences concentre, who is the proper and only object of adoration in the universe, and whom it is his everlasting interest no less than duty to love with an unceasing love, in life, in death, and through the endless ages of eternity.

Exciting these views and feelings, how can this ordinance fail to prompt the Christian's soul to proper *action*, to a more entire surrender of his heart to God, to greater confidence in the plan of salvation through the blood of atonement, that is, to a greater measure of living faith, to renewed purposes of holy obedience, and thus to the attainment of the end for which the Saviour bled,—"remission of sins?"

IV. *The mode of the Saviour's presence in the Eucharist.*

Although this ordinance was designed as a memorial of the dying love of the Redeemer, it has unhappily been the occasion of much *controversy* in the Christian church. The strongly

figurative language of the Saviour, together with the careful repetition of the precise words by the apostle Paul and the explanation annexed by him, was variously interpreted even in the earlier centuries of the Christian history, and a kind of mysterious influence ascribed to this ordinance. In the middle ages of ignorance and superstition, views of the grossest kind obtained currency; until, in the year 1215, the doctrine of *transubstantiation* was formally adopted as the doctrine of the Roman Catholic church, by a Lateran Council, under pope Innocent III.

According to this doctrine, the outward emblems, though they retain their external form, are no longer bread and wine; but "*the consecration of the bread and wine produces a change of the whole substance of the bread, into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine, into the substance of his blood.*"[1] This monstrous error, Luther and his coadjutors rejected for the following reasons, viz. a) It is contradicted by the clear and indisputable testimony of our senses, which demonstrate to us that no change has occurred in the nature and properties of the bread and wine. We have this testimony not of one sense only, but of sight, taste, smell, and touch: nor of the senses of one individual only; but of all men of every generation and country. But no testimony is so strong as that of the senses; because on it rests even our belief of the scriptures.[2] b) This doctrine contradicts the universal observation of mankind, that all bodies (material substances) must occupy definite portions of space,

[1] Sancta hæc Synodus declarat, per consecrationem panis et vini, conversionem fieri totius substantiæ panis, in substatiam corporis Christi, Domini nostri, et totius substantiæ vini in substantiam sanguinis ejus—quæ conversio convenienter et proprie *Transubstantiatio* est appellata. Concil. Trident. Sess. 13. cap. 4.

[2] 1 John 1. 3. That which we have *seen* and *heard*, declare we unto you. John 3: 11. Luke 24: 39. *Behold* my hands and my feet: *handle* me and *see* that it is I.

and cannot be at more than one place at the same time: for according to this tenet, every portion of consecrated bread is really the whole *material* body of the Saviour; hence the whole body is locally present in many different places at the same time, which is absurd. c) The apostle still calls the symbols bread and wine after their consecration, which he would not have done, if they had been transmuted into the body and blood of the Saviour.[1] d) Because the consecrated bread and wine are subject to the same laws of decomposition and corruption, as if they were not consecrated.[2] e) Because it is a comparatively recent doctrine, unknown in the Christian church in general, until about a thousand years after this sacrament was instituted.

But whilst the Reformers agreed in rejecting this papal error, it is much to be regretted, that they could neither harmonize among themselves as to what should be substituted in its stead, nor consent to walk together in love, when they could not entirely accord in opinion. It was on the subject of this doctrine, that the first important diversity existed among them; a diversity subsequently increased by the peculiar views of Calvin relative to the divine decrees. Alas! that men, distinguished so highly for intellect, and chosen of God to accomplish so great a work, should betray such a glaring want of liberality toward each other; that having gloriously cooperated in vanquishing the papal beast, they should turn their weapons against each other, for a point not decided in scripture, and therefore, of minor importance! Yet, when we recollect that this inflex-

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[1] 1 Cor. 10: 16. 11: 26.

[2] The following lines of Cicero, are so applicable to the doctrine of transubstantiation, that if they had been written for the purpose, they could not have been made more appropriate. "Dum fruges Cererem, vinum Liberum dicimus, genere nos quidem sermonis utimur usitato, sed ecquen tam amentem esse putas, qui illud quo vescatur Deum credat esse?" Nor would the charge be entirely inapplicable to the language occasionally used by some early Lutheran divines.

ible, uncompromising spirit was an essential qualification for the successful conflict against the papal hierarchy, for which they were designed by Providence, we shall feel constrained to regard it rather as an unavoidable evil of the age than a blemish in the character of the blessed reformers.

The views adopted by the different reformers and principal divines of the Protestant churches, though numerous and diversified in their modes of explanation, may be reduced generically to four.

The first was that adopted by Luther and the major part of the Lutheran church in the sixteenth and seventeenth and earlier part of the eighteenth centuries, as also by the Moravian church until the present day. The advocates of this opinion premised the following points:

a) That agreeably to the declarations of the apostle Paul,[1] all human bodies will experience a very great change at death, and prior to the resurrection in their glorified form. The extent of this change they regarded as such, that although enough of the old body would remain to serve as the basis of its identity (its substance, or essence); its *properties* would be entirely changed, and it would no longer be subject to the laws and limitations which now regulate matter. In this sense they understood the declaration of the apostle, that the glorified body shall be incorruptible and immortal, yea, so highly refined and elevated in its properties, that it may be said to partake of the properties of a spirit, may justly be called "a spiritual body." Now, it cannot be denied that the body of the Saviour has also experienced the change described by Paul: and it is therefore, no

[1] 1 Cor. 15: 40. There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. v. 44. There is a natural body and there is a *spiritual* body. v. 52. 53. The dead shall be raised *incorruptible*, and we shall be changed; for this corruptible must put on *incorruption* and this mortal must put on *immortality*.

longer subject to those laws, nor possessed of those properties (visibility, tangibility, &c.) which belonged to it in the present world.

b) It was, moreover, believed, that in consequence of its union with the divine nature, the glorified body of Christ had been endowed with properties still higher than those which the glorified bodies of the saints will possess: and that it was therefore even less restricted by those laws which now regulate the matter known to us.

With these premises, their view of this subject may be advantageously stated thus:

I. *The bread and wine remain in all respects unchanged; but the invisible, glorified body and blood of Christ are also actually present at the celebration of the eucharist, and exert an influence on all those who receive the bread and wine; not indeed present in that form nor with those properties which belonged to the Saviour's body on earth, such as visibility, tangibility, &c. for these it no longer possesses, but present with the new and elevated properties which now belong to its glorified state.*

There seems to have been a peculiar fondness among the advocates of this view, to use the figurative language of the Saviour and speak of eating his body and drinking his blood; but they denied that they understood these terms literally, and rejected the idea of a carnal, material reception. Their idea seems to have generally been, that we thereby come into *communion* with, and under the *influence* of the glorified Saviour.

Speaking of this view the celebrated Lutheran divine Dr. Mosheim says:[1] "What the nature of this presence is, we know not. The thing itself we know; but the mode of its truth is a mystery which we cannot comprehend. We deny that Christ is present and received in a physical or material manner. But should any one ask, How is he present? our answer is, We

[1] Elementa Theol. Dogm. Vol. II. p. 328, 329.

know not. We commonly call his presence in this holy ordinance, a 'sacramental presence.' This might seem to be an attempt to define the mode of his presence; but by this word we mean nothing more than that we are ignorant of the mode. It has been said, we receive Jesus *in*, *under*, or *with* the bread (in, cum, sub pane). These three words might signify three modes; but they are designed to indicate, that we do not wish to determine any thing about the mode of Christ's presence. Those therefore err, who say, that we believe in *impanation*, or that Christ is *in* the bread and wine. Nor are those more correct who charge us with believing *subpanation*, that is, that Christ is *under* the form of bread and wine. And equally groundless is the charge of *consubstantiation*, or the belief that the body and blood of Christ are changed into one substance with the bread and wine."

To all the objections, derived from the testimony of our senses, the advocates of this view reply, that they are based on the properties which belong to human bodies in this life, and therefore are not applicable to the glorified body of Christ, which does not possess these properties.

To the objection that this system is exposed to the same difficulties as transubstantiation, it is responded that the cases are different. In the Roman Catholic error, which the reformers rejected, an exemption from the common laws and properties of matter, is attributed to bread and wine, material substances confessedly belonging to this world, and subject to the laws of matter; but the Lutheran doctrine ascribes such exemption to a substance belonging to another world, concerning which all admit and the scriptures expressly declare, that it does differ very much from ordinary matter.

II. The second view of this doctrine is that, which was early entertained by some Lutheran divines, and, in the last century, became generally current.

That the bread and wine remain in all respects unchanged;

that the glorified human nature of Christ is not substantially (essentially) present at all, but only influentially, efficaciously or virtually; that is, by a special supernatural influence exerted on all communicants, at the time when they receive the bread and wine.

This was probably the opinion of that distinguished ornament of the Lutheran church, Melancthon, who rejected the doctrine of the *substantial* presence of the glorified human nature, and wisely maintained, that as the scriptures had not specified the mode of the Saviour's presence, every individual should be left to the free exercise of his own judgment. Many of the most judicious divines adopted the views of Melancthon, although he and they were treated with much intolerance by the other party. The Formula Concordiæ, which was published in 1577 expressly to counteract this opinion, strange as it appears, seems itself, in some places to inculcate it, and is thus inconsistent with itself as will be seen from the following extract: "And by that word (spiritually) we exclude those Capernaitish notions concerning a *gross* and *carnal* presence which have been attributed to our churches by the sacramentarians, in defiance of all our public protestations against them. And when we use this term (spiritually), we wish to be understood as signifying, that the body and blood are received, and eaten, and drank *spiritually* in the holy supper. For although the participation is effected by the mouth, the manner in which it is done is *spiritual*."[1] Yet in other parts of the work its authors even go beyond Luther himself.

When they say, this spiritual participation is effected by the mouth, the only intelligible idea deducible from their language

[1] Formul. Concord. Art. VII. No. XXI. p. 604. "Et quidem per vocabulum illud (spiritualiter) Capernaiticas illas imaginationes de *crassa* et *carnali* presentia excludimus et rejicimus: quæ ecclesiis per sacramentarios, post tot publicas nostras protestationas, affingitur. Et in ea sententia intelligi volumus vocabulum (spiritualiter) cum dicimus, corpus et sanguinem Christi in sacra cœna spiritualiter accipi, edi et bibi. Tametsi enim participatio illa ore fiat; tamen modus spiritualis est."

is, that this influence, which Christ exerts on us through his body and blood, is made dependent on the oral reception of the external emblems, bread and wine.

The habit which prevailed of using the strongly figurative language of the Saviour even beyond the extent of his example, often involves the earlier advocates of this second opinion in inconsistency ; yet there was always a strong party in the church who favoured Melancthon's views, nor was the power of the princes nor the influence of symbolic restrictions sufficient to repress them.

Among the later divines who have asserted the merely virtual or influential presence of the Saviour in the eucharist, may be ranked Reinhard, Zachariæ, Storr, Flatt, Marheinecke, &c.

Of this opinion also was the distinguished reformer, Calvin, whose sentiments are in this country often misapprehended, but who certainly used language fully as strong as that above cited from the Lutheran Symbol. "I therefore maintain (says Calvin) that in the *mystery* of the supper, by the emblems bread and wine, Christ is *really exhibited* to us, that is, his body and blood, in which he yielded full obedience in order to work out a righteousness for us : by which, in the first place, we may as it were become united with him into one body, and secondly, being made partakers of the *substance* of himself, also be strengthened by the reception of every blessing."[1] The entire opinion of Calvin is thus stated by a very distinguished living writer of Germany :[2]

[1] Dico igitur in cœnæ mysterio per symbola panis et vini Christum vere nobis exhiberi, adeoque corpus et sanguinem ejus, in quibus omnem obedientiam pro comparanda nobis justitia adimplevit : quo scilicet primum in unum corpus cum ipso coalescamus ; deinde participes substantiæ ejus facti, in bonorum omnium communicatione virtutem quoque sentiamus. Institut. Lib. IV. C. XVII. 11.

[2] Brettschneider's Systematische Entwickelung aller in der Dogmatik vorkommender Begriffe, p. 721. edit. 3. 1826.

"Calvin's *spiritual* reception of the body and blood of Christ is indeed a real but not an oral one, and consists in this, that in the moment in which we partake of the bread and wine, if our hearts are by faith elevated to him, a supernatural influence emanates from the substance of the glorified body of Christ (that is and remains in heaven) by which the soul of the believer is animated and strengthened in a *mysterious* manner. But the unbeliever receives nothing more than bread and wine." The only difference between the above extracts from Calvin and the views of some Lutherans is, that the former confines this supernatural influence to believers, whilst the latter extend it to all who partake of the consecrated elements.

III. *The third opinion is, that there is no presence of the glorified* HUMAN *nature of the Saviour, either substantial or influential, nor any thing mysterious or supernatural in the eucharist; yet that whilst the bread and wine are merely symbolic representations of the Saviour's absent body by which we are reminded of his sufferings, there is also a* PECULIAR *and* SPECIAL, *spiritual blessing bestowed by the divine Saviour on all worthy communicants, by which their faith and Christian graces are confirmed.* This view seems sometimes to have been maintained by Melancthon and by some of those Lutheran divines, who were termed Sacramentarians; and is received by not a few theologians of the Lutheran church in Europe and America at the present day.

According to this view, the Holy supper exerts its influence as a symbolic representation of divine truth, on the principles explained in the discussion of the means of grace, see Art. V; but its worthy reception is also the condition of a *special spiritual* blessing from the *divine* Saviour, beyond that of the other means; a) Not only because religious exercises of various kinds are usually combined on sacramental occasions, and continued longer than at other times; but b) also because of the peculiarly impressive manner in which the solemn truths conveyed by it are

presented to the mind; and c) in consequence of the Saviour's *promise* of a *peculiar spiritual* blessing on the celebration of this ordinance, which is invariably conferred on all worthy communicants. The promise of this blessing they regard as contained in the strongly figurative language of the Saviour, by which he represents himself as the spiritual food of the soul, and also in the declaration of Paul, that the cup and bread are the communion, or communication, bestowment, or impartation, of the body and blood of Christ, that is, of the blessings purchased by his atoning death.

IV. *The fourth opinion is, that there is no presence of the human nature of the Saviour of any kind in the holy supper; nor any peculiar spiritual influence connected with this ordinance other than that accompanying the truths, which it symbolically represents.*

This opinion was maintained by the distinguished reformer Zuinglius, and is generally received by his followers in Europe and America, and at present also by the great mass of the Calvinistic churches, which gradually abandoned the views of Calvin on this subject.

There are but two points of *doctrinal* diversity, worthy of note between the second and third views above detailed. a) The former maintains that the influence exerted on communicants is a supernatural and mysterious one, whilst the latter ascribes to the eucharist itself, no other effect, than the moral influence of the truths which it symbolically represents. And b) the former considers the special influence of this ordinance as exerted by the glorified *human* nature of the Saviour, whilst the latter regards the special blessing, attendant on the worthy participation of the Lord's supper, as a gracious influence emanating from the divine being.

In regard to *practical* utility, there appears to be little or no difference between them. If, as is contended, the influence emanating from the Saviour, is nothing material; what can it be

but a special *spiritual* blessing on the soul of the communicant? And it may be questioned, whether, what is termed an "influential" presence can in propriety of language be termed any presence at all.

In point of *exegetical* evidence, it has been argued with no small degree of plausibility, that the opinion of a real, that is, an actual presence, either substantial as held by Luther, or influential as maintained by Melancthon and Calvin, has a decided advantage over the other views.

After a protracted and unprofitable struggle, the Lutheran church has long since settled down in the happy conviction, that on this, as on all other subjects not clearly determined by the inspired volume, her sons shall be left to follow the dictates of their own conscience, having none to molest them or make them afraid. In the Lutheran church in this country, each of the above views has some advocates, though the great body of our divines, if we mistake not, embraces either the second or third.

V. *The subjects of this Ordinance.*

It is obvious, from the very design of this ordinance, that it ought not to be administered, either to children,[1] to the insane, or to the immoral or careless sinner. Not to children, because they are incapable of receiving it in remembrance of Christ. Yet this were of itself not conclusive, for the same objection would lie against circumcision of infants, which was nevertheless commanded by God. But in regard to the eucharist, Paul ex-

[1] It was customary in the third century, especially in the African church, to administer this sacrament to children. Usually it was given them in milk and honey. Augustine regarded it as essential to the salvation of children, and based his opinion on John 6:50. Nay, so extravagant were the views of the mysterious efficacy of this ordinance, that it was sometimes administered even to the dead, and deposited with them in the grave.

pressly prescribes self-examination as a necessary preparation, and also pronounces a judgment on all those communicants who do not discern the Lord's body. In Germany young persons are usually admitted to this ordinance at the age of fourteen or later; in this country, persons are not generally received so early, unless they exhibit decided marks of piety. Not to the insane, as they are, for the time being, not responsible agents. Nor to the immoral or indifferent, as their character is obviously incompatible with a *sincere* attempt to commemorate the sufferings of the Saviour.

All worthy communicants must be a) members of the visible church by baptism, and be in good standing. From the earliest ages it was customary to exclude those, who were under church discipline, from this ordinance. b) They must have a sincere belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation proposed in the gospel. If members of the visible church should unhappily so far backslide as to fall into unbelief, though they may not yet have been disciplined by the church, they ought not to present themselves at the table of the Lord.

c) They must be engaged in a sincere effort to lead a life accordant with their profession. What progress they should first have made before they approach the sacred board, is not specified in the sacred volume, nor does it appear from the nature of the ordinance, that any other qualifications should be required than those which entitle an adult to baptism. Accordingly, the practice and theory of the Lutheran church on this subject are, we think, correctly expressed in our Formula of church government. They must have *surrendered themselves to God*, "they must be obedient subjects of divine grace, that is, they must either be genuine Christians, or satisfy the church council, that they are sincerely endeavouring to become such."[1] We could not maintain that no one can properly be admitted to

[1] Formula, &c. Chap. IV. Sec. V.

this ordinance, who has doubts of having experienced an entire change of heart; yet certainly no one ought either to desire, or be permitted by the church council, to partake of this sacred feast, whose conduct has not for some time before afforded satisfactory evidence of his having renounced the ways of sin, and, in sincerity of heart, engaged in working out his salvation with fear and trembling.

The practice of the church in the earliest ages seems evidently to have been, that all candidates for sacramental communion, were first received, for some length of time, as probationers, termed *catechumens;* that as such they received particular instruction on the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion: and were not admitted to the table of the Lord, until they had proved their profession by their conduct.

On the other hand, those who possess the above-mentioned qualifications need not be deterred from enjoying the benefits of this blessed ordinance by a dread of incurring the wrath of God. Because a) such abuses as the apostle censures in the Corinthian Christians, viz. drunkenness and gluttony, never occur at the present day; b) If the persons possessing these qualifications, seek to prepare their hearts by "self-examination" and thus come with an humble, penitent and believing heart, they will not be unworthy communicants. c) Even the sin of unworthy communion, does not necessarily involve "damnation," any more than other flagrant sins of which we do not repent. The Greek word, used by the apostle, properly signifies *judgment:* and the context proves, that he meant temporal chastisements, (therefore are many weak, &c.) which were inflicted for the benefit of the transgressor, that his soul might *not* be damned. For he afterward says, "we are judged, (chastened), that we may *not* be condemned." The erroneous version of this word, has justly been regarded by many able commentators, as the most unhappy one contained in the common English version. It has certainly instilled a superstitious dread into

many pious minds, which materially interfered with the intended comfort and edification of this holy ordinance. Let the sincere disciple of Christ, therefore, cast off this fearful apprehension, and having duly examined himself and renewed his purposes of holy obedience, let him thus eat that bread and drink that wine, which were appointed as emblems not of divine wrath, but of the dying *love* of a crucified Redeemer.

ARTICLE XI.

Of Confession.

In regard to confession they teach, that private absolution ought to be retained in the churches; but that an enumeration of all our transgressions is not requisite in confession. For this is an impossibility, according to the declaration of the Psalmist: *Who can understand his errors?*

Although the churches advocated the retention of confession, they entirely changed its nature, and divested it of the objectionable features belonging to it in the Roman Catholic church. a) They declare it void of scriptural authority, and merely regard it as a custom of the church, which, in the case of true penitents, may tend to tranquillize the conscience; and which affords the pastor a convenient opportunity for personal interview with each communicant. In discussing the abuses of the Roman church, which were corrected by the Reformers, they

expressly declare[1] that "Confession before or to a priest *is not commanded in scripture.*" b) They denied that the priest has the power absolutely to forgive sins, either at confession or elsewhere, attributing to him only that declarative power conceded by all Protestants, of announcing to the applicant the conditions on which God has promised to forgive sins; and leaving it to the conscience of the sinner himself and the judgment of the all-seeing God, to decide whether he possesses these qualifications. "It is not" (say they)[2] "the declaration of the officiating priest which we are to believe, but the word of God, who forgives our sins." c) They reject as unscriptural and improper, "penance, indulgences, pilgrimages," &c. And d) declare that "we obtain pardon solely by faith" in the Lord Jesus. The rite of private absolution has however since been entirely rejected by the Lutheran church, and nothing but the following custom retained, viz. That on the day prior to the time of preparatory service, and sometimes also before and after the preparatory service itself, the intended communicants visit the pastor in his house, or some other suitable place, and give him an opportunity of conversing with them individually on their spiritual condition, and of recording their names in the sacramental register.

At the preparatory service, after singing and prayer, a suitable discourse is delivered, the object of which is to assist the hearers in examining themselves, in order to bring them to a sense of their sinfulness, to induce them to humble themselves before the throne of God, to seek forgiveness of sins in the blood of the Redeemer, and to make the solemn resolution to amend their lives. After this, questions embodying a confession of sins and reliance on the Saviour for pardon are proposed by the pastor, and answered affirmatively by all who feel able thus to reply. The congregation then kneels, the pastor offers up

[1] Art. 25. On the Abuses of Confession.

[2] Ibid. loc. cit.

a fervent prayer of confession, after which, when the audience has arisen, he repeats the promises of God to pardon truly penitent and believing souls; and warns all to guard against self-deception or hypocrisy, because (he adds) the sins of hypocrites and unbelievers God will not pardon, notwithstanding their external confession.

In some of our churches the abovenamed visit of the people to the pastor for the purpose of private and personal interview with them, has become obsolete.

ARTICLE XII.

Of Repentance.

Concerning repentance they teach, that those who have relapsed into sin after baptism, may at any time obtain pardon, when they repent: and that the church ought to grant absolution (restore to church privileges) such as manifest repentance.

But repentance properly consists of two parts. The one is contrition or dread on account of acknowledged sin. The other is faith, which is produced by the gospel, or by means of absolution: which believes that pardon for sin is bestowed for Christ's sake; which tranquillizes the conscience, and liberates it from fear. Such repentance must be succeeded by good works as its fruits.

They condemn the doctrine of such as deny, that those who have once been justified, may lose the Holy Spirit. In like manner those who contend, that some persons attain so high a degree of perfection in this life, that they cannot sin. They reject also those, who are unwilling to absolve (restore to church privileges) such as have backslidden after baptism, even if they repent: as also those who teach that remission of sins is not obtained through faith; but require us to merit grace by our good works.

The nature and constituent parts of true repentance, have already been discussed, in the consideration of the moral changes wrought in the mind of the sinner, by the Holy Spirit through the means of grace, (Art. VI.,) to which the reader is referred. By an enumeration of the constituent parts of repentance, taken in its general sense, the Confessors designed to contradict the erroneous views of the Papists, who teach that repentance consists of these *three* parts, *contrition* of heart, oral *confession* to a priest, and *satisfaction*, by performing certain meritorious works of penance, prescribed by the priest.

The latter clause of this article touches on the doctrines of final perseverance and sinless perfection, both of which are rejected by the Confessors.

There is a slight variation between the phraseology of the German and the Latin original, in regard to the former of these opinions. The language of the latter we have given above; the German copy says: "We reject the opinion of those who teach, that such as have once become *pious*, cannot *fall* from grace." The sense of both readings is substantially the same. Both clearly refer to the doctrine of *final* perseverance; because all parties admitted the possibility of a believer's tempora-

ry relapse into sin. The Latin original specifies this as an error of the Anabaptists. The followers of Zuingli are not also here referred to, because this doctrine formed no part of their creed; and the Institutes of Calvin were not yet in existence.[1] When therefore we recollect, that Melancthon composed the Augsburg Confession out of the Torgau Articles which Luther had written, and that, when completed, it was submitted to the review, and received the entire sanction of Luther; we are unable to see any more reason to doubt, that at the time when this confession was presented, A. D. 1530, Luther had rejected the error here condemned, than that he had renounced the papal corruptions rejected in the same articles. The fact that his subsequent publications occasionally exhibit language inconsistent with this article of the Confession, only proves that this great master spirit of the Reformation, had not leisure, amid the overwhelming labours of his life, fully to systematize his views, and adjust his phraseology to the minute relations of the theological system.[2]

The following extract, translated from his Hauspostille, by the Rev. Mr. Kurtz, the able editor of the Lutheran Observer, may serve as a specimen of Luther's language on this subject.

"'*For many be called but few chosen.*'—Matt. 20: 16. Some put their own construction on these words and explain them thus: Many be called, that is, God *tenders* his grace to many, but few are chosen, that is, he *bestows* his grace on few, because few are to be saved. But this is *indeed a wicked interpretation*, for how is it possible for one, entertaining such ideas of the divine character, not to be an enemy of God, whose will alone, accord-

[1] They were first published in 1533.

[2] On the question, whether Luther retained those doctrines afterwards known as the peculiarities of Calvin, see Schlosseri Lutherus Lutheranus; in which the author demonstrates the opinion above expressed, by copious citations from Luther's works on all the distinguishing points, and especially unconditional election and reprobation.

ing to this view, is wanting in order to his salvation? Moreover let this exposition be contrasted with that which a man will cherish after he shall have become experimentally acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ, and it will be found to be nothing less than *downright diabolical blasphemy.*

"This passage has therefore an entirely different meaning. Many be called, &c. The Gospel is general and public, and designed for all and every one who will hear and accept it. God requires it to be proclaimed thus generally and publicly for the very purpose *that all and every one may hear, believe and receive it, and be saved.* But how do men act? precisely as is stated in the words under consideration: few are chosen, that is, few so demean themselves toward the Gospel that God can take pleasure in them. This is what is implied in not being chosen in Christ. Those are the chosen, those the persons that please God who hear the gospel diligently, believe in Christ, manifest their faith by their good works, and cheerfully submit to the sufferings brought upon them by the faithful practice of their religious duties. This is the true sense, which can perplex none, and is adapted to the reformation of all. On the other hand, those who believe that God is not anxious for the salvation of all, are in danger either of falling into despondency, or of becoming secure and reckless sinners, living like brutes, and thinking it is already decreed whether we are to be saved or not, why then should we concern ourselves about it?

"It is God's *earnest will and desire from all eternity that all mankind may be saved and be made partakers of eternal glory,* as Ezekiel 18th ch. has plainly declared, "*Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live?*" If then he desires the salvation of every sinner that lives and moves every where under the high and wide heavens, why should you, influenced by foolish thoughts suggested by the enemy, exclude and separate yourselves from the grace of God? Hauspost. domin. sept. fol. m. 62. 63. ed. Francof. ad. Vidar. 1548."

The other error, which the Confessors condemn in this Article is the belief of

Sinless Perfection.

Many enlightened advocates for the use of this phraseology at the present day, explain it in a manner perfectly consistent with the word of God, and seem inconsistent only in retaining the name, whilst they reject the thing. Others entertain opinions on this subject calculated to foster spiritual pride, and at variance with truly spiritual views of our own unworthiness. The point in question is not, whether believers can be perfectly sincere in their efforts to serve God: this is not only possible, but necessary to the character of a true believer. Nor is the question whether we can attain evangelical perfection, that is whether we can perform what is required of us in the gospel as the condition of salvation, viz. repentance, faith, and a constant effort to fulfil the whole law of God. But the point is, can a believer yield an absolutely perfect obedience to all the requisitions of the divine law, by the omission of not a single duty in thought, feeling, word and deed, and by the commission of no act of thought, feeling, word or deed, that is opposed to the all-perfect law of God? That we cannot attain this perfection in the present life is evident, from

1. The most unequivocal declarations of the sacred volume. St. John expressly pronounces that man the subject of self-deception, and void of truth, who professes to have no sin.[1] The same doctrine is taught by the apostle James,[2] who declares that in many things we *all* offend, and by other inspired pen-men.[3]

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[1] John 1: 8. If we say that we have no sin *we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

[2] Ch. 3: 2. For in many things we offend altogether.

[3] Eccles. 7: 20. For there is not a just *man on earth,* that doeth good and sinneth not. Prov. 20: 9. Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

2. It is evident from the conflict with indwelling sin, which all true Christians are required to carry on till death. The apostle Paul declares to his Galatian fellow Christians, that the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, so that they could not accomplish even those holy purposes which they formed.[1] And to the Romans he confessed that there was still a law in his members opposed to the better dictates of his judgment.[2]

3. In the Lord's prayer we are taught by the Saviour himself to implore pardon for our daily offences. But where could be the necessity of imploring pardon, if we had committed no offence?

4. The law of God requires perfect obedience not only in outward actions but also in the thoughts and affections of the heart. This obedience moreover must be universal, and perfect in degree. But what mortal can with truth assert, that his heart is ever glowing with seraphic ardor for the cause of his heavenly Father, and can challenge the omniscient Jehovah, "who putteth no trust in his saints and before whom the heavens are not clean," to find any sin in him?[3]

5. The ancient saints confessed their short comings; how then shall we pretend to excel them in holiness?[4]

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[1] Gal. 5: 15. 17. For, brethren,—the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that *ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

[2] Rom. 7: 14—25. For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) there dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me (this was not the case *before* the apostle's conversion); but how to perform that which is good I find not.—For I delight in the law of God after the inward man (this also he could say only after his conversion); but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

[3] Job 15: 14—16.

[4] Psalm 130: 3. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? Psalm 143: 2. Enter not into judgment with thy ser-

6. If any believer attained the state of perfection on earth, he would no longer need the daily application to the blood of the Saviour; but might be justified by the deeds of the law, and take the glory to himself!

ARTICLE XIII.

Of the use of the Sacraments.

Concerning the use of the sacraments, our churches teach, that they were instituted not only as marks of a Christian profession amongst men; but rather as signs and evidences of the divine disposition towards us, tendered for the purpose of exciting and confirming the faith of those who use them. Hence the sacraments ought to be received with faith in the promises which are exhibited and proposed by them. They therefore condemn those, who maintain, that the sacraments produce justification in their recipients as a matter of course (ex opere operato,) and who do not teach that faith is necessary, in the reception of the sacraments, to the remission of sins.

The topics of this article, having made the subjects of ample discussion under Articles IX and X, the reader is referred thither for information on them.

vant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. Isaiah 64: 6. But we are all as an unclean thing: and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

ARTCLE XIV.

Of Church Orders.

Concerning church orders they teach, that no person ought publicly to teach in the church, or to administer the sacraments, without a regular call.

The necessity of a regular call to the gospel ministry was naturally introduced in treating of the officers of the church under Articles VII and VIII.

ARTICLE XV.

Of Religious Ceremonies.

Concerning ecclesiastical ceremonies they teach, that those ceremonies ought to be observed, which can be attended to without sin, and which promote peace and good order in the church, such as certain holydays, festivals, &c. Concerning matters of this kind, however, caution should be observed, lest the consciences of men be burdened, as though such observances were necessary to salvation. Men should also be apprised, that human

traditionary observances, instituted with a view to appease God, to merit his favour, and make satisfaction for sins, are contrary to the gospel and the doctrine of faith. Wherefore vows and traditionary observances concerning meats, days, &c. instituted to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the gospel.

This article asserts in regard to human and uninspired regulations in church matters in general, what the Formula of the Lutheran church in this country alleges concerning government and discipline in particular: "That as Jesus Christ has left no entire, specific formulary of government and discipline for his church; it is the duty of every individual church to adopt such regulations as appear to them most consistent with the spirit and precepts of the New Testament, and best calculated to subserve the interests of the church of Christ."[1] There can be no doubt of the applicability of this principle to ceremonies and forms of worship; for no one will contend that the New Testament contains a "specific and entire" directory on this subject.

Of Festivals.

Under the sanction of this principle, whilst the Confessors rejected the great majority of fasts and holydays, which had accumulated into an intolerable burden in the papal church, and seriously interfered with the temporal duties of men; they retained on the ground of expediency a few of the cardinal holydays, which had been instituted in the earlier ages in commemoration of the fundamental facts of the Christian religion: such as the birth, suffering, resurrection and ascension of the son of

[1] Chapter I. sect. 5.

God and the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. Nor does their conduct, on this subject, appear to us objectionable. It has been no small part of the wisdom of nations to perpetuate the memory of salutary events and illustrious personages by various methods. For this purpose the pencil of the painter, the chisel of the statuary, the bold designs of the architect and the highest inspirations of the poet have all been put into requisition; and for the same reason have the wisest nations set apart particular days, to commemorate illustrious personages and events in their history. Christianity addresses herself to man as he is, and the means by which her doctrines are perpetuated, are adapted to the laws of the human mind. Hence, on the same principle, and with infinitely greater propriety, the Christian church has set apart particular days, to keep alive in the forgetful memories of her children, the recollection of the principal events connected with the establishment of our holy and divine religion. And if it be just to perpetuate the memory of the patriot, who liberates his country from the yoke of foreign bondage; how much more is it proper to cherish the memory of him, who delivered a world from the servitude of the arch-enemy Satan. If he who bestows temporal blessings on his country, is justly recollected with gratitude; much more should the noblest feelings of our souls be called into action, and the most fervent gratitude be enkindled in our hearts, by the recollection of him, who purchased for a fallen and guilty world the incalculable blessings of eternal life.

But there is another aspect of this subject deserving of notice. Christianity is a religion designed for the whole mass of mankind. Now matters of fact, the truth of which rests on the testimony of the senses, are most intelligible to the great body of men; and for obvious reasons arising from the structure of the mind, best calculated to make an impression upon them. Hence the very pillars on which Christianity was wisely made to rest, are matters of fact, intelligible in every language, suited

to the capacity of every nation, and equally applicable to all future generations. Without admitting these, no man can be a Christian; and a sincere and cordial belief of their truth, is closely connected with the character of a true disciple of our Lord. Hence every rational method, actually tending to extend and perpetuate the knowledge of these facts, must exert a salutary influence on Christianity itself. The disorders and dissipation, which in some places occur on these days, are remnants of papal corruption; and have no more connexion with the rational observance of these festivals, than with a fast day appointed by any church or by the civil authorities of our land. The only days thus celebrated by the Lutheran church in this country are Christmas, Good-Friday, Easter, Ascension day and Whitsunday.

The Confessors however justly enter their protest against the undue multiplication of such human enactments; as well as against the ascription of divine authority and obligation to them. In the list of "Abusus Mutati," or "Abuses corrected," which was presented to the diet along with this Confession, they adduce scripture proof,[1] which clearly establishes the impropriety of the errors here rejected.

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[1] Matth. 15: 3. But he (Jesus) answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your *traditions*? v. 9. But *in vain* they do worship me teaching for doctrines the *commandments of men*. And in reference to the prohibition of *meats*, v. 11. Not that which goeth into the mouth, defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Rom. 14: 17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. 1 Tim. 4: 1. 3. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils —forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them who believe and know the truth. Also Acts 15: 10. Col. 2; 16. 20. See chap. V. of the Abuses.

ARTICLE XVI.

Of Political Affairs.

In regard to political affairs our churches teach, that legitimate political enactments are good works of God; that it is lawful for Christians to hold civil offices, to pronounce judgment and decide cases according to the imperial and other existing laws; to inflict just punishment, wage just wars and serve in them; to make lawful contracts; hold property; to make oath when required by the magistrate, to marry and be married.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who interdict to Christians the performance of these civil duties. They also condemn those who make evangelical perfection consist not in the fear of God and in faith, but in the abandonment of all civil duties: because the gospel teaches the necessity of ceaseless righteousness of heart, whilst it does not reject the duties of civil and domestic life, but directs them to be observed as of divine appointment, and performed in the spirit of Christian benevolence. Hence Christians ought necessarily to yield obedience to the civil officers and laws of the land; unless they should command something sinful; in which case it is a duty to obey God rather than man. Acts 4: 19.

Of Civil Governments.

The civil government under which the Confessors lived was one of various, complicated and oft conflicting relations. The parties concerned were the emperor, the nobility, the people, and the pope of Rome. But apart from the Romish priesthood and the pope, who periodically drained Germany of immense sums by the traffic in indulgences; it is well known that the Germanic Confederacy, the constitution by which the several states of that interesting country were then held together, was, as it still is, entirely too feeble to regulate the conflicting interests arising in peace, or to unite them by the bond of a common interest in time of war. It moreover contemplates exclusively the independence and privileges of the princes, whilst it makes no provision for the rights and interests of the subjects. These are regulated by the prince and government of each circle separately. Accordingly the inhabitants of some circles enjoyed a good degree of prosperity and freedom, whilst those of others were and still are grievously oppressed. It is certainly commendable, that living under a government so defective, the confessors should have uttered not a word inconsistent with the purest principles of republicanism; nay that they even asserted to the face of the Emperor, their right to resist such laws, as they deemed sinful.

I. *The Confessors do not pronounce any particular kind of government of divine origin.* The different forms of government may be reduced to the following: a) *despotism*, or the dominion of one man, whose will is the exclusive law, unrestricted by any constitution, or by nobility. Of this kind have generally been the governments of the Asiatic nations; whose sovereigns sway the sceptre of absolute controul over the life and property of their subjects. The governments of Russia, Spain, and Austria, are but little removed from this form, and that of Prussia partakes of the same elements. b) *Aristocracy*, in

which the government is lodged in the hands of nobles. c) *Mixed* or *limited monarchy;* in which the power is rested jointly in a king, the nobility, and representatives of the people, according to the provisions of a constitution. This form of government is found in England and France, and presents many advantages over the two first named. d) The Democratic or Republican form of government; in which the *people* are regarded as the only source of power; which is exercised by representatives and executives chosen by the people for a limited time, and responsible to them. This is doubtless the most perfect form of government, as it secures in the highest degree the rights and happiness of all its citizens. Of this fact the history of our own favoured country, affords demonstrative proof. Under any one of these forms of government the principles of the Reformers would have led them to remain obedient, if it were administered in such a manner as to secure the rights and promote the happiness of its members. For it is a principle maintained by the ablest writers on political philosophy, that resistance to any existing government becomes proper and a duty, only when the grievances actually endured or with certainty foreseen, outweigh the hazards of anarchy and violence always attendant on revolutions. Yet the seeds of liberty, civil as well as religious, were sown by the Reformers; and the same principles which led them to protest against the corruptions, and resist the encroachments of the Papal hierarchy, led our fathers to erect the standard of liberty on these Western shores, exploded the absurd doctrine of passive obedience to kings, and taught the crowned heads of Europe, that their subjects have rights, which can no longer be trampled on with the impunity of the dark ages. The salutary influence of the Reformation on the political condition of Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, Geneva and England, is well known to all acquainted with the history of modern Europe. Even Russia, which, belonging to the Greek or Eastern church, did not sympathize in

the commotions that rent the Western hierarchy, still derived incidentally important advantages from the reformation. Peter I. encouraged by the example of the British king, declared himself the head of the Greek church in his dominions, and independent of the patriarch of Constantinople. And the religious tolerance of the czars, has induced many Protestant colonies from Germany, Poland and Holland to seek a home in the bosom of their empire.

II. In this article the *Confessors clearly represent the welfare of the people as the proper end of all civil governments.* The legislative power is to be exercised in the production of "just laws." The judiciary is to be conducted on equitable principles; "for the judgment to be given is just." "Just punishments" alone are to be inflicted, "the right of property," and "the obligations of contracts to be observed," and "the duties both of civil and domestic life are to be performed in the spirit of Christian benevolence."

All human government is but an approximation to justice; nor is it possible for any thing short of infinite wisdom, either to frame a code of Laws, or execute one, in which the various interests of all the citizens and of every section of country can be perfectly adjusted, and the punishments be minutely graduated to every shade of guilt. Yet the worst government is better than entire anarchy, and the majority of human polities secure to their subjects a far higher degree of happiness, than could be attained without them, whilst some few confer on man all the blessings that he can reasonably ask. Christianity does not prescribe any exclusive form of government, but the observance of its precepts on this subject will alleviate the burdens of the worst, and, fully acted out, will eventually conduct to the adoption of the best form, under which man is capable of living. It clearly points out the security and happiness of the people; as the end to be contemplated, and leaves to the experience and judgment of men the adoption of the polity by which at any time, and in any nation it can best be secured. Had the divine Saviour pre-

scribed any form, it would doubtless have been the republican; for such is essentially the form of government which he gave to his church, as may be seen in the Formula annexed to this volume. But the grand design of his appearance on earth was not to erect a political fabric, but to redeem the human family, and establish a spiritual kingdom; in which the sons and daughters of men, by nature aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, should be elevated intellectually and morally, and qualified for citizenship in heaven, for participation in angelic felicity in the celestial empire of Jehovah.

III. *The Confessors inculcate the justice of revolution in those governments, which fail to accomplish the just end of their establishment.*

The sacred volume commands rulers to "be a terror not to *good* works, but to the *evil;*" to be "ministers of God for *good;*"[1] to execute righteous judgment, and "shed no innocent blood."[2] But if rulers transgress their duty, and require aught that is improper, we are commanded to obey God rather than man.[3] Accordingly the Confessors incorporate the same doctrine in their exposition of the principles by which they are governed, and expressly declare, that obedience to civil officers ceases to be a duty, when their demands on us are inconsistent with right. But if it be a duty of every individual under such circumstances to refuse obedience to existing governments, he

[1] Rom. 13: 3. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to *the evil.* Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is *good*, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee *for good.*

[2] Jerem. 22: 3. Thus saith the Lord: execute ye judgment and righteousness and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless and the widow; neither shed innocent blood in this place. See also 2 Chron. 19: 6. 7.

[3] Acts 4: 19. But Peter and John answered and said unto them; Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

should do it in a manner promising success. Combination among the oppressed is necessary to a successful resistance of existing governments, and therefore proper. And combination of the oppressed to resist their oppressors is rebellion; its successful termination revolution. Hence in the language of our illustrious fathers: It does sometimes, "in the course of human events, become necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another;" for "they hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the persuit of happiness.—That to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government," &c. It was in defence of these principles that our fathers drew the sword and pledged "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honour;" and a righteous God smiled upon their efforts. Under the wide heavens no other land can be found, in which the great mass of the people enjoy so large a share of liberty and security for their equal rights.

Yet is there a class of our population in regard to which these fervid inspirations of patriotism above quoted, would be the keenest irony. Alas, that in reciting them, the image of the poor enslaved African should rise up to our view, who after the lapse of half a century, yet groans in bondage among us, a reproach to our political system, and a violation of the rights of "equal" man! To the honor of Pennsylvania and the States North of her, be it said, that they have given liberty to their captives. Some Western States have, in constructing their constitutions, nobly excluded slavery. Our Southern fellow-citizens are also often unjustly censured; for not only had the present generation no agency in introducing slavery in-

to the land; the great majority of them are in favour of some rational plan of abolition. Himself a native of a slave state, and for many years resident among slaves, the writer is convinced that those who advocate entire, immediate abolition, do not understand the subject. This great work has its difficulties. But it is feasible. The experience of Great Britain has in several instances demonstrated it on a small scale. Reason and justice demand it; and the recent glorious resolution of the British parliament, in regard to their West India Colonies, will, we trust, place it beyond all doubt. The work, in justice to the master, and in mercy to the slave, must be gradual; but its commencement ought to be delayed no longer.

The American Colonization Society was doubtless prompted by the noblest principles of human nature, and has hitherto exerted a most salutary influence on the condition and prospects of our slave population. On the Christian and philanthropist its claims are strong: because it has already introduced Christianity and civilization into a portion of Africa, and bids fair, if sustained, to spread their blessed influence throughout that benighted land. It has moreover actually given liberty to about 1000 slaves, and is the only means which has succeeded in calling the deliberate and calm attention of the majority of southern slave-holders to the subject of slavery itself, its political, social and moral evils to the states in which it still exists; as well as its abstract injustice and criminality in the sight of that God, "who out of one blood made all nations of men, to dwell on the face of the earth."[1] The essays and speeches, which it has elicited from our ablest orators, statesmen and philosophers, in slave-holding states as well as elsewhere, have shed a flood of light throughout the community, and produced convictions in the public mind without which the cause of the poor African would have forever remained hopeless. Yet, though a warm friend of the Colonization Society from its ori-

[1] Acts 17: 26.

gin, the writer never believed, nor can he yet see reason to believe, that African colonization either would or could be extended so far as to remove entirely the negro from our land. Whilst voluntary colonization in Africa and elsewhere, ought to be encouraged; it seems almost certain, that a portion of our coloured population will always remain amongst us. Colonization, moreover, if conducted with any view to the entire removal of our slave-population, will require a previous system of legislation for the manumission of the whole mass within a reasonable time. This ought to be a simultaneous step. But when laws for the gradual abolition of slavery shall have been enacted, the inadequacy of foreign colonization will appear as clear as demonstration. Many will moreover be unwilling to remove across the Atlantic, to an unknown land; and coercion would be unjust. If there were any truth in the argument that the descent of the negro from Africa requires his removal thither, ours by parity of reasoning, would send us back to Europe. It has been demonstrated by the experience of non-slaveholding States, that the expense of free labour is less than that of feeding and clothing the slave, together with the interest of the capital invested in them, and risk of loss by their disease or death.

From all these considerations it would appear to be the duty of philanthropists and Christians to advocate the cause of colonization in Africa and elsewhere; but at the same time also to maintain the justice and necessity of *gradual* and *entire* abolition by legislative provision of the several States. It is certain that the federal government of our nation, is precluded by the Constitution from interference with this subject by any direct enactment; except at the request, or by consent of the slave-holding States. The Northern States may discuss the subject, and appeal to the patriotism and justice of their Southern fellow-citizens; but on the South is the duty of legislative action incumbent. In the arduous attempt to remedy a desolating evil, in which the present generation find themselves *inno-*

cently involved by the guilt of their ancestors, the Northern States ought, and it is thought would be willing to lend pecuniary aid. Into what nobler or more salutary and patriotic channel could the overflowing streams of our national treasury be made for a season to flow? If, as must be admitted, the guilt of slavery rests exclusively on the head of those who first riveted the chains on any of God's creatures, and on those who refuse to strike off those fetters after it can be done with safety to all concerned; then must the North come in for a large portion of the guilt, for much of the infernal traffic was carried on by Northern vessels. But in this noble enterprize there should be as little crimination as possible. All should feel that crying injustice was inflicted by our ancestors on the poor African, by reducing him to slavery, and that we become partakers of their guilt, if we protract his degradation, and delay his restoration to the unalienable rights of man any longer than the nature of the case unavoidably demands. Let the American patriot recollect the language of his fathers, "that all men are created equal," and have unalienable rights, among which is "*liberty*." Let him remember, that with these words on their lips, they invoked the blessing of Heaven on their struggle, and that He who rules in the heaven of heavens heard their cry.

Then let him look at the poor African, doomed to drag out his life in slavery amidst us. Let him

> See in his soul, involved with thickest night,
> An emanation of eternal light,
> Ordain'd 'midst sinking worlds, his dust to fire,
> And shine forever, when the stars expire.
> Is he not Man, though knowledge never shed
> Her quick'ning beams on his neglected head?
> Is he not Man, though sweet religion's voice
> Ne'er bade the mourner in his God rejoice?
> Is he not Man, by sin and suffering tried?
> Is he not Man, *for whom the Saviour died*?

IV. On the relation between Church and State, the Confessors inculcate some salutary lessons.

They inveigh, in § VII. of "The Abuses Corrected," against the union of civil and ecclesiastical power in the bishops. They condemn the practice of the popes, who interfered in the political government of Europe; and especially their having on several occasions *deposed kings*, and *absolved the inhabitants of different countries, from their allegiance to their political rulers.* Yet they were not called on to discuss this subject at length; nor had the circumstances of their situation led them to its thorough and impartial investigation. They still admitted, not that church should govern the state; but that the civil government might to a certain extent manage the affairs of the church.

The doctrine of the New Testament on this subject certainly is, and therefore the practice of all Christian countries ought to be, *that church and state be kept entirely distinct.* This is evident from various considerations:

a) Christ explicitly declared that his "kingdom is not of this world," that is, that it is not a temporal, political kingdom.[1]

b) He nowhere assigns to ministers of the gospel any political duties: as such, therefore, they have none such to perform. If their fellow-citizens choose to call into service their talents, experience and integrity in behalf of their political welfare, and they feel at liberty to engage in such duties, they do it *as citizens* of the country, and *not as ministers* of the gospel. As a general rule, the writer believes, that ministers of the gospel ought not to engage in the duties of political office; because their sacred calling may well engage their entire time and talents; and there are always men enough of talent and integrity, who are both able and willing to consecrate their time to the service of their country. We are inclined, moreover, to entertain the belief, that in the present tranquil state of our happy

[1] John 18: 36.

country, few men, whose hearts are rightly engaged in the duties of the Christian ministry, will be found willing to engage in political life. In times of great emergency, however, when the liberties of a country are in imminent danger, it would seem to be a paramount duty incumbent on all citizens, in every possible manner to cooperate with the constituted authorities of the land, to avert impending danger. Among the most zealous champions of American liberty were the Rev. Dr Witherspoon of the Presbyterian church, and General Muhlenberg, who after having laboured for years in the Lutheran ministry, aided in fighting our country's battles, and afterward was elected Speaker in the American Congress.

c) Christ no where enjoins on political rulers as such, any share in the management of his church. On the contrary, he has appointed some person in the church for the performance of every duty enjoined on the church. Hence, when by an unhallowed union of Church and State, civil rulers as such assume the privilege of exercising certain ecclesiastical rights, they perform duties which the Head of the church assigned to others.

d) It is absurd to suppose, that the king, or any other civil ruler, who as such has received no ecclesiastical ordination or power, should be the fountain of all spiritual authority; that they, who are elevated to office without the necessity of any spiritual qualifications, should wield the most important spiritual influence in the church. If civil rulers possess the qualifications required in scripture for any office in the Church, they ought undoubtedly be eligible to office as well as others, yea their high standing and extensive influence among men, afford them special opportunities of actively promoting the kingdom of Christ. Yet, when they act as officers of the church, they do so not by virtue of their political station, but of their ecclesiastical election. And if they bring disgrace on their brethren in Christ by any impropriety of conduct, they ought to be disciplined by the church, regardless of their civil office.

V. In strict accordance with all these principles, is the happy form of government, adopted by our revolutionary fathers.

This consists of one *National* or *General Government*, and a number of *State Governments*. The former is a government of specified and limited powers: the latter of reserved rights, embracing all the objects of legislation necessary to the well being of the citizens, which have not been expressly granted to Congress by the national Constitutions, or which are not necessarily implied in the powers thus given. The powers of the general government are divided between its *Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches.* The former are confided to Congress; which consists of a House of Representatives and a Senate, each of which may dissent from the acts of the other. The concurrence of both, together with the signature of the President, or a majority of two thirds, if he object, is necessary to the enactment of a law.

The Senate however sustains a threefold character, as a branch of the legislature, as a judicial court for the trial of impeachments, and as a part of the executive power to approve or disapprove the appointments of the President, and to ratify or reject treaties with foreign powers.

The *Executive* power of the government is vested in a President, and certain Executive Departments, the incumbents of which, together with the Vice President and the Attorney General, at present constitute his cabinet. The constitution recognizes these departments, and states that "appointments may be made by the heads of them." The departments now established are, that of State, of the Treasury, of the Navy, and of War: together with the Post-office department.

The *Judicial* power of the federal government is vested in a Supreme Court, which at present is composed of seven judges, who also hold circuit courts in the different districts, into which the United States are divided for this purpose.

These are the general features of that happy form of national

government, under which we live, for which our warmest gratitude is due to the God of nations, and which every good citizen is bound to study and defend. As the Constitution, under which our government is conducted, was unavoidably couched in general terms, and could not descend to the detail of particulars, some diversity has arisen in the construction given to some of its parts, and several different theories have been adopted to support respectively each construction. a) That Constitution has recently been regarded by a few as a contract between *separate, independent and sovereign* States, for the maintenance of a government which shall have charge of some specified interests, common to them all. This construction would make our happy country not one, but many nations; and by giving to each State the power to nullify and refuse obedience to the laws of the general government, it entirely destroys the efficiency of the national union, and would make it little better than the wretched confederacy of the Germanic empire. Any State, or number of States, might nullify a declaration of war, believed by all the other States to be absolutely necessary in self-defence, and might refuse to take part in it. Civil discord would thus inevitably ensue, our happy country be rent in pieces, and the hands of our citizens be bathed in their brothers' blood. We would suppose the fallacy of this construction placed beyond all doubt, by that single clause of the United States Constitution, by virtue of which the Judges of all the State Courts are required to take and have taken an oath, to support the Constitution of the United States and laws of Congress, "*any thing in their State Constitution or laws to the contrary notwithstanding.*"

b) Others have regarded it as a contract not of the people in their primary capacity, but between all the several *States* as such, for the purposes above specified; reserving to each State, not the right of nullifying any law of Congress and remaining in the Union, but the right of peacefully seceding from their con-

nexion with the union, when they believe themselves oppressed either by the operations of the government in its constitutional structure, of which they have correct views, or by its corrupt administration. The principal error in this view of the subject seems to be, that secession is regarded as a *constitutional* right, that is, a right guarantied by the Constitution. Thus to withdraw and renounce his allegiance to any government, by which he is wantonly and seriously oppressed, is doubtless the indefeasible right of man; but it is based in the laws of nature, not in the provisions of the Constitution, and ought always to be called by its right name, *revolution*; in order that the people may not be deceived by false names and plunge into the dangerous whirlpool of revolution, before they maturely survey the rocks and cliffs on which they may be wrecked.

c) It is regarded as a contract between all the *people* or citizens of the different states, in their *elementary or primary capacity*, to establish and maintain a government for certain limited and specified purposes of general good; it being agreed that all powers not expressly given to the general government, or actually necessary to the execution of the trusts thus specifically granted, are *reserved* by the *people* to be exercised in their State governments: that the Constitution of the United States and the laws of Congress, constitutionally enacted, are "the supreme law of the land," that from any supposed unconstitutional law of Congress the recourse of the citizen believing himself aggrieved, is to the Supreme Court of the United States: that there is no right of nullification or of secession in the citizen or States except in such cases as by the unalienable rights of man justify revolution.

That the framers of our national Constitution regarded it as a contract of the *people* in their primary capacity, and not of the States, is expressly asserted by the first clause of the instrument itself. "We the *people*" of these United States, &c. That it is a government of *limited* and *specified* powers, is evi-

dent because the constitution enumerates those powers, and because it expressly declares, that all the powers not specifically granted to Congress are retained by the States severally. The principle of granting to Congress additional powers by unlimited construction of the Constitution, is therefore obviously inconsistent with the genius of our government; and, if not opposed, would soon entirely change the happy balance of power between the State and general governments established by our fathers, and terminate in *consolidation*.

This view of our national constitution has been and still is entertained by the great mass of our ablest statesmen. It is entertained by the Supreme Court itself, the highest authority for expounding the constitution and laws of the union,[1] and has recently been set forth in colours that cannot be mistaken, in the able and lucid proclamation of the President of the United States:[2] "The people of the United States formed the Constitution; acting through the State Legislatures in making the compact to meet and to discuss its provisions, and acting in separate Conventions when they ratified those provisions; but the terms used in its construction, show it to be a government, in which *the people of all the States collectively are represented*. ——The Constitution of the United States, then, forms a government, not a league. —— It is a government in which all the *people* are represented, which operates directly *on the people* individually, not upon the States. But each State having expressly parted with so many powers as to constitute jointly with the other States a single nation, cannot from that time possess any right to secede, because such secession does not break a league, but destroys the unity of a nation," &c. The different predilection of our citizens, for a free or a rigid construction of

[1] See Decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, in Harrison vs. Hunter's lessee. I Wheaton's Reports 323.

[2] See the Proclamation of Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, in regard to the convention of South Carolina, December 10, 1832.

the Constitution in reference to the powers of the general government, are the basis (so far as principle is concerned) of the distinction between the two great national parties which have from the beginning existed in our land.[1] Violent party spirit, especially when based on no political principles, but amounting to mere contest for office, is doubtless unchristian and dangerous; but the intelligent and upright intellectual conflict about the principles of our government and the influence of particular laws, that is, genuine, honest party spirit, is the duty of every faithful citizen and friend of his country, and is necessary to the purity of our political institutions. It is for these reasons that we have felt it a duty to expand our remarks on this article of the Confession, farther than we would otherwise have been disposed; especially as principles of the most dangerous nature have been boldly asserted in some sections of our country, and it thus becomes more imperiously the duty of every Christian patriot to study the principles and vindicate the integrity of our happy political institutions.

The establishment of any religion by law, is happily and explicitly forbidden in the Constitution of the Union. Our fathers justly believed, that religion ought now, as was the case in the days of the apostles, be left to take care of itself. Hence they regarded the Federal Government as a compact formed *for civil and not religious* purposes; and its designs are fully accomplished, its appropriate functions fully discharged, when it has secured and regulated our civil interests. It is inhibited

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[1] The structure of the several State governments varies much, and is more or less republican according as the right of suffrage and eligibility to office are more or less generally extended, and according to the number of public offices which are filled not by executive appointment, but by popular election.

It is worthy of note, that whilst the patriots of the South have been distinguished for their able opposition to the increase of power in the national government by latitudinarian construction of the Constitution; their State governments are less republican than those of their Northern brethren.

from establishing any religious test, or in any way interfering with the rights of conscience. It is unquestionable, that the prosperity of the Christian religion and the permanence of our fabric of civil government, depend on a firm resistance to the least abandonment of this ground. The writer does not believe any sect in the nation, nor even the leaders of any Protestant church either contemplate or would desire an establishment by law; but if, at any time, symptoms of such a disposition should appear, he would regard it the duty of all true Christians to unite not only with each other, but also with infidels and deists to resist the attempt.

Our government therefore, according to its institutions, can neither persecute nor tolerate persecution. How fully the illustrious reformer Luther coincided with these views, even at a time when some other Reformers observed a different practice, is seen from his own nervous language:[1] "Do you say, the civil government should indeed not force men to believe, but *only interfere in order that the people be not led astray by false doctrine?* and, *how could heretics otherwise be put down?* I answer, to counteract heresy is the business of ministers, not of the civil rulers. Here a different course must be pursued, and other weapons than the sword must fight these battles. The word of God must here contend; if this proves unavailing, neither can civil governments remedy the evil, though they should deluge the earth in blood. Heresy is an intellectual thing, that cannot be hewn by the sword, nor burned with fire, nor drowned with water. The word of God alone can subdue it, as Paul says, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10: 4. 5.

[1] See Luther's works (Walch's edition) Vol. 10. p. 461.

ARTICLE XVII.

Of Christ's Return to Judgment.

Our churches also teach, that at the end of the world, Christ will appear for judgment; that he will raise all the dead; that he will give to the pious and elect, eternal life and endless joys; but will condemn wicked men and devils to be punished without end.

They reject the opinions of the Anabaptists, who maintain, that the punishment of devils and condemned men, will have an end: in like manner they condemn those, who circulate the Judaizing notion, that prior to the resurrection of the dead, the pious will engross the government of the world, and the wicked be every where oppressed. [German: The pious will establish a separate temporal government and all the wicked be exterminated.]

The principal subjects touched on in this article, are the Millennium, the resurrection, the judgment and future eternal state of the righteous and the wicked.

The Millennium.

I. The Confessors in this article justly repudiate the idea, which had dazzled the imaginations of the ancient Jews and

Chiliasts, and, it seems, found some advocates also among the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, that the blessed Saviour would in the latter day personally appear on earth, and establish a theocracy not unlike that of the Old Testament.[1] The sacred volume however no where inculcates this doctrine, although it evidently does predict, what has long been the cherished object of the Christian's prayer, that there will be an extraordinary and universal diffusion of the gospel over the whole earth, prior to the close of the present economy. Nor do the scriptures teach, that in this latter day of glory for Zion, the gospel will be received by every individual of the human family. For although there will be extraordinary outpourings of the Holy Spirit, these sacred influences will still not be irresistible, and therefore it is not probable that all without exception will submit to them. The rising race, moreover, would still exhibit the fruits of their depraved nature, until brought under the influence of godliness; and even Christians themselves will be sanctified but in part, will still exhibit the evidences of human frailty.

But the millennium will consist of an extraordinary and general diffusion of Christianity successively among all the nations of the earth, effected through the increased application of the appointed means of grace in all their legitimate forms, by professing Christians, accompanied by extraordinary effusions of the Holy Spirit.

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[1] The fact that even the ancient Jews fixed its duration at 1000 years, arose, it is thought, from a mystical interpretation of the Mosaic narrative of creation. A thousand years being as but one day with God, it was conjectured that the first six days of creation represent 6000 years of toil and adversity; but the seventh or sabbath day was regarded as a type of a thousand years' rest and prosperity to God's people on earth. In the New Testament, the same name and term of duration have found corroboration from a passage in Revelation, (ch. 20: 2. 3.,) supposed to refer to the future glorious spread of the gospel, in which Satan is said "to have been bound 1000 years."

II. The *grounds of expectation* for the universal extension of Christianity are various and satisfactory.

a) It is *probable* from the very design of the gospel. All men and all nations are alike subject to the evils of sin; and if the deliverance offered in the gospel is desirable for one nation, it is equally so for the others. b) The benevolence of God regards not persons; but, in all nations, those of similar character are alike pleasing to him. It would seem accordant then with that benevolence, which sent the gospel to some nations, to publish it eventually to all. These reasons, though by no means conclusive, possess some force. c) It is rendered still more probably by the fact, that the Saviour himself made provision for its universal diffusion. The order of men, whom he commissioned as heralds of the cross, was made perpetual; and a promise given of his constant presence and blessing. d) He gave them, moreover, an express command to "preach the gospel to every creature," "to make disciples of all nations," and to prosecute their work until "the end of the world." e) But that *the kingdom of the Messiah actually will be extended over the whole earth, is rendered absolutely certain*, because the sacred volume has expressly predicted the fact, not only in figurative language,[1] but also in literal and express terms.[2]

[1] Isaiah 2: 2. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and *all nations shall flow unto it.* Rev. 11: 15. And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Dan. 2: 34. 35. Psalm 72: 8—11. Rev. 20: 2. 3.

[2] Gen. 22: 18. In thy seed shall *all the nations* of the earth be blessed. Psalm 2: 8. I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Matth. 24: 14. And *this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world*, for a witness *unto all nations*, and then shall the end come. Malachi 1: 11. *From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same*, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts.

III. The *means*, by which this glorious era is to be ushered in, are none other than those appointed in God's word.

a) They are amply sufficient. The word of God is able to awaken, enlighten, convert and save millions of sinners as well as a single one. The preaching of the word might in less than a century, as well be extended to every rational creature on earth, as to the 200,000,000 who now enjoy it; if professing Christians were generally animated by a zeal and devotion worthy of the sacred cause they have espoused, of the exalted and glorious hopes which they cherish. Prayer, the fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous, can be made for the whole world as well as for part of it. And who can venture to doubt, that the blessing of the divine Spirit would not only be poured out commensurate to the zeal and fidelity with which the Pauls of modern days would plant and the Apolloses water, but in far more abundant effusions? Yea, has not God himself said, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh"—before the great and terrible day of the Lord come?[1]

b) God has not appointed any other instrumentality to accomplish this glorious work. Yes, hear it, ye Christians, ye who profess to love your Saviour, he has predicted the universal spread of the gospel, and promised his blessing on the means which ye now possess, having informed us of no other. But how inadequate are the present exertions of his people! How little are you doing to usher in the latter day glory! How much more might you, how much more must you do, before the gospel of the kingdom can be preached to all nations. How much more zealous and frequent must be your prayers to the Lord of the harvest for an increase of labourers! How much more liberal must you be in aiding those to prepare for

[1] Joel 2: 28. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, &c. &c.

the glorious work, who are unable to sustain themselves through their course of preparation! How much more attentive, my Christian brethren, must we be to seek out such from among the fruits of revivals, who at our meetings for prayer, evince more than ordinary gifts and graces! Were every Christian, and especially every minister, as faithful as he ought to be in regard to this matter, the number of labourers would soon be doubled and trebled, and glorious things be accomplished for Zion. Have we not reason to doubt the sincerity of our prayers to the Lord of the harvest, whilst we feel so indifferent whether or not they are answered? Whilst in all probability there are many, at least some in every one of our churches, whom the Lord has made willing, if we would but show them the lamentable condition of the heathen world, and even the moral wastes of Christian countries. How many benevolent enterprizes are languishing through the penury of Christians! How many through their indisposition to participate in the labours of benevolence. Millions more of bibles and other valuable books might now be advantageously distributed through the different nations of the earth. Missionaries, Tracts, and Sabbath-Schools might be increased almost without limit. In short it is literally true, the "field" for Christian benevolence "is the world," and every rational scheme, however old or new, which in its nature is resolvable to one or other of the appointed means of grace or command of God's word, deserves and should receive support from the children of God. Does not love to his neighbour require every Christian to take part in the benevolent operations of the day? Does not the glory of God, does not his own salvation demand it?

IV. The time of the *commencement* of this glorious era is not fixed in literal terms in the word of God. We are told, in general, that it shall be a) "in the last days,"[1] just before the end of the present world, "then shall the end come."[2]

[1] Isaiah 2: 2. [2] Matth. 24: 14.

b) There are some symbolic, figurative determinations of the time of its commencement; but the import of these depends on an understanding of the entire chain of prophetic annunciations, which are still enveloped in some obscurity. The prophet Daniel assigns to the power, which "should speak great words against the Most High," and "wear out the saints," the term of "a time and times and the dividing (half) of a time." Supposing, according to the interpretation of eminent Commentators, this power to be either papacy or Mohammedanism; both commenced their oppression about the year A. D. 606—12. Regarding a "time" as a prophetic year, of twelve months, each including thirty days, we would have three and a half prophetic years, or forty-two prophetic months, which, reckoning a year for a day, are equivalent to 1260 ordinary years, and would bring the time for the commencement of the latter day glory of the church to about the year 1866 till 1872. But it is obvious, that as the papal hierarchy was gradually established, and several important steps in its progress are delineated by history; we might fix it either at the time abovementioned, (606,) when the Emperor Phocas declared the Roman pontiff head of the whole church; or at A. D. 754, when on the downfall of the kingdom of the Lombards and of the exarchate of Ravenna, the latter was granted by Pepin, king of France, to the Roman see, and thus the Pope made a temporal Prince. In the latter case the commencement of the Millennium would be in A. D. 2014. The spread of Mohammedanism may also be dated from the Hegyra or flight of that impostor, A. D. 622; and this, added to 1260, brings us to A. D. 1882.

The Revelation of Saint John also contains various chronological data, the result of which, in the judgment of the best commentators, assigns the beginning of the millennium to about the same time as those of Daniel, the latter half of the present

century. According to a recent writer on this subject[1] the precise time is about the year 1859.

But whilst, doubtless for wise reasons, we are not permitted to know the precise year of the millennial dawn, certain characteristics are exhibited as harbingers of the glorious era. As the tender branch and opening foliage of the fig tree, announce "that summer is near;" these stately steppings of our heavenly King are a token to his children, that his glorious reign is at hand. To these signs of the times must doubtless be reckoned a) the increase of effort in the cause of *missions* during the present century, and the remarkable and visible success with which they have been crowned: b) the laudable efforts of Bible Societies in Europe and America to translate the word of God into all languages and send it to all nations. c) The laudable efforts of Christians to distribute in small pamphlets, or tracts, the prominent truths of holy religion. d) The noble institution of Sabbath schools, which are not only a powerful auxiliary to true religion, but also tend, by diffusing a healthful morality, to perpetuate and extend the blessings of civil liberty. This gigantic scheme, by which the whole body of Christians may unite in preparing the rising generation for the kingdom of heaven, dispenses blessings on all departments of society. It is a blessing to teachers, a blessing to pupils, a blessing to parents. It furnishes the church with zealous pastors, the state with honest legislators, and heaven with heirs of glory.

These and other similar institutions, which like these, are so many different methods of spreading abroad the means of grace, are doubtless the pulsations of new life in the body of Christ on earth, and awaken the expectation of that glorious era, which has long been the subject of prophecy and prayer, when He

[1] See *The Prophetic History of the Christian Religion explained*; or a brief *Exposition of the Revelation of St. John*, by the Rev. J. G. Schmucker, D. D. York, Penn. 2 vols. 8vo. Also Bengelius and Dr. Young (Stilling) on the Apocalypse, and Faber on the Prophecies.

with whom is the residue of the Spirit "will pour it out on all flesh." Yet there is one characteristic in the operations of the present day, one principle mingled in the structure of the most efficient and salutary of these societies, closely connected, we think, with the millennial kingdom. We refer to that noble feature, which excludes every thing sectarian from their operations, and at whose invitation we often see assembled in the same house of God, different denominations of his worshippers, to offer their united sacrifice on one common altar to their common God: thus demonstrating to the world the truth of their profession, "One is our Master, Christ, but we are all brethren." This heavenly principle, emanating from the God of love, and taught and practised by the apostles, was alas too soon abandoned and too late recovered by the Christian church. Even the illustrious reformers of the sixteenth century, but imperfectly understood it. Too little of it is visible in the language of our Confessors and the conduct of the reformers generally. Had they learned to discriminate between the grand, fundamental features of Christianity, which all the denominations usually termed orthodox, now regard as taught in the inspired volume, and those of less importance and disputed certainty, in regard to which after the most solemn investigation, they differ; in short, had they been willing to associate and cooperate on the principles of these voluntary associations; their cause would have assumed a different aspect. Luther would not have disputed so obstinately about the unrevealed mode of the Saviour's presence in the eucharist, Calvin would have evinced more liberality towards those who rejected some of his opinions, the attention of Protestants would not have been so much diverted from the spirituality of religion by the heat of controversy, the church of Protestants would have borne more resemblance to that of the apostles, and the inroads made on the papal dominions would have been much greater. But the progress of the human mind is ever gradual. As the Egyptian gloom of the dark

ages, did not immediately succeed the meridian light of the apostolic era, so the Reformation was preceded by the efforts of a Wickliffe and a Huss: and even Luther and Calvin and Zuingle have left much to be learned by their successors. This additional lesson we believe consists, at least in part, in that spirit of brotherly love and Christian liberality which characterize the operations of the present age, and are mainly fostered by the voluntary associations in which different denominations unite. This is the spirit of genuine Christian love, and closely allied to the progress of Christ's kingdom. In our own country, moreover, the land of refuge for oppressed Europe, the spot chosen of God, for the perfect developement of the social compact, both in its civil and religious relations, an unprecedented multitude of sects is congregated. It requires no extraordinary acquaintance with human nature to perceive the peculiar exposure of the church of Christ to bigotry and sectarianism among us. In these United States especially the Christian church can never develope her full moral energies and glory without the spirit of brotherly love, of mutual cooperation of its parts in such voluntary associations. We need their harmonizing influence as an antidote to the most rancorous sectarianism, to save from its blasting influence even the conjugal and filial relations of protestant families, to prevent protestant denominations from being arrayed in systematic hostility against one another; and thus divided, from falling an ultimate prey to the compact and well organized legions of the papal see. We are not advocates for the Utopian scheme of those, who would immediately merge all denominations of Christians in one external visible church. At present we do not see how it could be effected. Even amid the splendour of Millennial light and glory there will probably not be an entire similarity of doctrinal view and ecclesiastical organization. But in that auspicious era, when Zion's watchmen shall see eye to eye, there

will doubtless be much concentration[1] of sects; there will be an evergrowing unity of feeling and action, until Paul and Apollos and Cephas, and Luther and Calvin and Zuingle and Wesley are lost in the Redeemer, and Christ is all in all. All admit that such a perfect unity is found in the church in heaven, that the inhabitants of those blissful regions all constitute in the highest sense *one fold under one shepherd*. Who then can deny that by an increase of this feeling the church on earth approximates to that of heaven? Who can doubt that similarity to heaven, will characterize the millennial kingdom on earth? And who would not hail as harbingers of the latter day glory those noble institutions of our land in which this feeling is embodied, and through which the streams of Christian benevolence flow to the spiritually destitute in this and foreign countries?

The continuance of the millennium as the term itself imports, is usually supposed to be 1000 natural years; some have supposed the thousand years during which Satan will be bound, prophetic years, making the millennium last 360,000 years. But if as may be, the binding of Satan does not refer to the latter day glory of the church, but is already past, the promised reign of Christ on earth may be much shorter than a thousand years; and the end of the world possibly soon follow the publication of the gospel to all nations. Still there are other reasons connected with the use made of the number 7 in the prophetic

[1] Among the most important and truly evangelical suggestions, which the writer has seen on this subject, must be ranked one of that radical divine and distinguished writer, the Rev. Dr. Ely, editor of the Philadelphian; who speaking of the proposed union of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of this country, advises the enlargement of the plan of union into that of an American Protestant church, which might embrace all those of any orthodox denomination, whose views and feelings inclined them to such a step. It is obvious that every step of this kind ought to be sincere and cordial, in order to be either pleasing to God, or profitable to his church. And a union of spirit ought to precede that of outward ecclesiastical organization.

chain of the scriptures, which weigh in favour of 7000 years as the duration of this world.

Of Death, and the *State of departed spirits prior to Judgment.*

I. *Death.*

a) Physical death may be termed the cessation of all the animal functions, and of the susceptibility in the organs for reaction. This solemn change, which sooner or later awaits all men, is also termed a separation of soul and body, and in scripture "returning to the dust," "to depart," or to be "absent from the body," the "dissolving of the earthly house of this tabernacle," to "be unclothed," to be asleep, &c.

b) This solemn change is the universal lot of mankind. Of all the millions of millions of men who have peopled our earth throughout the different generations since the days of Adam,[1] all, all have sunk beneath the stroke of this destroyer, a very few individuals[2] only excepted, who were transformed and translated to heaven by the immediate interposition of God, without seeing death.

c) This change occurs in every instance in accordance with the providence of God. It is indeed a matter of obvious philosophical calculation, that the constituent parts of the human organism are subject to regular decay, and therefore certain, that any human body, of given physical vigour and health, will under the ordinary action of the exhausting causes, wear out in a given time. But who fixed, and who preserves that ratio of exhaustion, but God? Who changes the character of the atmosphere that envelopes our earth, on the proportion of whose constituent parts the wear of our physical organization, and organic derangement of its parts, so much depend, but God? Therefore

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[1] Gen. 3: 19. Psalm 104: 29.

[2] Gen. 5: 24. Heb. 11: 5. 2 Kings 2: 11.

even ordinary deaths may justly be considered as mediately caused by him who gave us life. In many cases of unnatural death, such as those occasioned by lightning, by storms at sea, &c. God is the immediate author of the event. Again, man himself, as a voluntary agent, possesses within certain limits a controul over the circumstances of his situation, which accelerate or retard the dissolution of his body. Who does not know that the habits of dissipation, into which many plunge themselves, consume the energies of the body in the most visible manner? Who doubts that a premature grave is the ordinary lot of the confirmed drunkard and debauchee? that they "do not live out half their days."[1]

d) Nor are the circumstances under which death will overtake us, involved in less impenetrable darkness than the time of its occurrence. Whether it will meet us in the house or by the way, we know not; whether on a bed of sickness surrounded by our families and the ministers of our holy religion, or abroad among strangers to us, and strangers to God, who can administer to us no consolation, nor point our dying spirits to the great Physician of souls. Hence our daily study in life should be to prepare for death, that when the solemn hour comes it may not be a messenger of woe to us.

II. *State of the Soul between death and Judgment.*

To the reflecting mind in all ages no question has possessed greater or more thrilling interest than this, What shall become of me after death? When the machinery of this body will cease to move, when the blood will no more circulate in my veins nor the pulse of life throb at my heart, whither, oh whither shall the spirit which now animates this tenement of clay wing its flight? And various have been the conjectures of those, who did not

[1] Psalm 55: 23. Prov. 10: 27. The fear of the Lord prolongeth days; but the *years of the wicked shall be shortened.*

and those who did enjoy the light of revelation. Some have supposed, that at death, the soul enters the body of another person or animal born soon after; others, that it remains hovering around the deceased body, and dwells near the grave; others that it is not confined to the grave, but mingles with the living, knows them, sees their actions, and, by divine permission, can influence their actions: and others imagined that so soon as the soul leaves the body, it is transferred to some planet or other remote part of the universe, there in pleasure or in pain to await the solemnities of the judgment day.

Some of these ideas may be reasonable and some perhaps true, but all in reason's eye are mere conjecture. From that sacred volume alone, "which placed life and immortality in clearer light" can we learn their nature; from him alone who made the various mansions in our father's house, can we learn their structure and dimensions.

The language of scripture, like all other language, is conventional and gradual in its formation. The history, religion, laws, manners, arts and sciences of a nation, impress a corresponding peculiarity on the vocabulary of its language, and in every tongue there are some words, for which none of precisely the same import, can be found in another. These remarks are exemplified in the passages of scripture referring to the subject now under consideration. In our English version we find but two words to express the future state of the dead; but in the original of the Old and New Testament we find three. This third[1] word is *hades* in the Greek, and in the Hebrew *Sheol*. That it does not mean exactly what the other two do, is evident. For whilst we are told that the wicked shall never enter heaven, nor the righteous dwell in hell; of this third state or place, we are informed that both the righteous and the wicked go to it. The

[1] שְׁאוֹל sheol, שָׁמַיִם heavens, גֵּיא הִנֹּם gehenna or hell, in the Old Test.; and in the New ἅδης hades, οὐρανος heaven, γεννα gehenna or hell.

pious patriarch Jacob, believing that his favourite child had become the prey of wild beasts, exclaimed: I shall go down mourning to my son into *sheol*;[1] the very same word which is used by the psalmist in the passage, "The *wicked* shall be driven into hell *(sheol)*, and all *the nations that know not God*.[2] The prophet Samuel, when raised from the dead, not by the witch, but by God to her dismay, observed to *wicked* Saul whom God had forsaken, "This day thou shalt be with me."[3] The same usage of the word is found in the New Testament, as will hereafter appear especially in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus: and for the sake of perspicuity we shall translate both by the term *hades*.

a) *This intermediate state of departed spirits is represented in the sacred volume as having locality*, as being a particular place. But whether this is to be understood literally, or whether it is merely a condescension to the imbecility of the human mind, is a point which probably cannot be decided in this life. We know nothing about the relation of spirits to space; but certain it is, we cannot conceive of a spirit excepting as existing in some particular place. In the language of scripture hades is represented as local. This idea is confirmed by the circumstance that the spirits of the dead are described as being *collected together* in hades; for Jacob expected to meet his son Joseph there, and we cannot conceive of their being collected together excepting at some particular place. Where this place is we cannot determine. Jacob said I will go *down* into hades to my son mourning; but the words "up" and "down," are altogether relative terms, and therefore do not determine the point. David, speaking prophetically in the person of the Saviour, says "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;"[4] but does not mention where

[1] Gen. 37: 34.

[2] Psalm 9: 17.

[3] 1 Sam. 28: 19.

[4] Psalm 16: 10.

hades is. Into this abode of departed spirits the Saviour probably went, during the three days that his body lay in the sepulchre. In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man too, hades is clearly represented as a particular place, divided into two apartments. The rich man awoke in hades, and found Lazarus there also, though in a different apartment of it, afar off from him. Yet they were so near that they could see each other, and could speak together.

These passages taken separately might lead to the idea that hades is a third *place*, different from heaven and hell. But Paul expected, by being absent from the body, to be introduced into the presence of the Lord Jesus, who we know "now sitteth at the right hand of the Father in heaven." John tells us, that the souls which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb; *are* before the *throne of God*. Hence we may probably infer, that hades and sheol, are *generic* terms, signifying indefinitely the state and abode of all departed spirits, whilst the *place* of both the righteous and the wicked is the same which they will occupy eternally, although the *state* of each is different from what it will be after judgment. For although the rich man could see and speak to Lazarus, such intercourse may be possible to spirits millions of miles apart; and the distance designated in the parable by the terms "afar off," may possibly have been no less. According to this view therefore, it is probable that there is no third place, but certain that there is an intermediate state of departed spirits prior to judgment. Oh how interesting will be the moment when we shall awake in it, and see and feel its real character!

b) *It is not a state of sleep.* This opinion is chiefly entertained by infidels and materialists. Few Christians of any note have ever advocated it. The case of Lazarus and the rich man, is sufficient to prove the contrary. Admitting that the whole is a parable, and all the language figurative; surely it cannot be contended, that the rich man's being in torments, his lifting up

his eyes to father Abraham and soliciting a drop of water to cool his parched tongue, is intended figuratively to convey the idea that he was asleep! And how can his request, that Abraham might send some one from the dead to warn his surviving brethren "lest they also come into this place of torment," be reconciled with the idea that either the rich man or Lazarus or the dead in general were in a state of sleep or insensibility?

The argument on which infidels and materialists lay chief stress is, that the action of the soul in this life depends on the health of the body, especially of the brain, and that when the body dies the action of the soul will also cease. This opinion, they contend, is confirmed by the fact, that it is not uncommon for the mind to sink into a disordered action and ultimately to an insensibility to surrounding scenes, shortly before the death of the body. On this subject the writer finds the ideas which have satisfied his own mind, so well expressed in a late eminent medical publication, that he prefers giving the very words of that distinguished author:[1] "It might be shown (says he) that the brain is the principal organ through which the operations of the mind are performed; and it does not as many have supposed, necessarily involve the doctrine of materialism, to affirm that certain disorders of that organ are capable of disturbing those operations. If the most skilful musician in the world were placed before an unstrung and broken instrument, he could not produce that harmony which he usually produced when that instrument was perfect; nay, on the contrary, the sounds would be discordant; and yet it would be manifestly most illogical to conclude from such an effect, that the powers of the musician were impaired, since they merely appeared to be so from the imperfection of the instrument. Now what the instrument is to the musician, the brain may be to the mind, for aught we know to the contrary, and to pursue the figure, as the musician has an exist-

[1] Potter's edition of Armstrong on Typhus fever, p. 403.

ence distinct from that of the instrument, so the mind (or soul) may have an existence distinct from the brain." We add, all our evidence is in favour of the supposition that they are distinct, and no facts can be adduced which are inconsistent with it. Therefore, even on the ground of philosophy, the Christian doctrine is the true one. But as we have the scriptures, which were given by inspiration of God, this matter is divested of all doubt, our belief rests upon the sure testimony of him who made the soul, who made the abode of spirits also, and who therefore knows what is the destiny appointed for us after we have left this world and "the places that know us now shall know us no more forever."

c) *According to scripture, it is not a state of probation or of purgation.* There have indeed been some, who contended that life is not the exclusive time to serve the Lord in order to ensure the great reward of future happiness, but that in the grave whither we haste, in the world of spirits, there would again be a time of probation and a state of purgation. But let us beware of deferring preparation for eternity on this dangerous supposition, for of such a future probation we find nothing in the word of God. It has been urged, that the benevolence of God forbids the idea that he would punish the impenitent sinner in the world to come, without giving him also an opportunity to escape. But we cannot certainly know what God will do, except when he himself tells us. And he has told us, not that the sinner can repent after death, but that "the wicked shall be driven away in their wickedness," "that there awaits them nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary." Justice, moreover, to the creatures he has made, requires that God should enforce those equitable laws which tend to make them all happy, and the contempt and unchastised transgression of which would ultimately involve them all in misery: yea, even the essential benevolence of his nature compels him to support the

dignity of his government, and it is a truth no less certain than solemn, that

"*A God all mercy, is a God unjust.*"

The whole tenour of scripture supports the doctrine, that life is the exclusive time of probation. All the means of grace by which God converts the soul, will be withdrawn at death. In the grave the wicked will find no more churches, no ministers of mercy calling them to repentance, no word of God to convert the soul. Alas, they will be separated from the pious and be confined among wicked spirits. But if the word of God contained no other proof on this point, would not the parable of Lazarus and the rich man be amply sufficient? When the rich man awoke, where did he find himself? In a land of probation? Oh no! "he lifted up his eyes in *torments*." And when he applied for a drop of water to cool his tongue, did father Abraham console him with the prospect of deliverance from his misery? or admonish him, "repent and be brought over to Lazarus?" Alas, we read no such words, the rich man heard no such accents of comfort. But Abraham said, "Son remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented,"—nay more—"Besides all this (he says) between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they that would pass hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come thence!!!"

d) *The sacred volume represents it as a state of happiness to the righteous, and of misery to the wicked.*

The phrase "Abraham's bosom" in the parable referred to, is evidently figurative, and contains an allusion to the manner of lying around the table at meat, which prevailed in the days of our Lord. It was customary for the master of the house who gave the feast, to place nearest to him that guest to whom he wished to show peculiar favour.

The future joys of the righteous are in scripture often represented under the figure of a feast or marriage supper. The idea, therefore, expressed by the terms, is that Lazarus was enjoying the blessings promised to them that love the Lord. But this truth is also taught us in language that is not figurative: "Lazarus, we are expressly and plainly told, is comforted." To the penitent thief upon the cross, our blessed Saviour said, "this day thou shalt be with me in paradise," that is, in happiness this day, shortly after the body shall have suffered death thy spirit shall be in a place of happiness. The apostle Paul when he was in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, "be absent from the body" and "present with the Lord," most evidently teaches us that the state of the righteous after death is a state of happiness. And when exulting about the blessings purchased for believers by Christ he exclaims: "O death, where is thy sting? O hades (ἀδης) where is thy victory?" the sentiment intended by him is, that whatever terror may heretofore have enveloped death, and whatever suspense or fearful foreboding the righteous may have had about the region of departed spirits, Christ had removed it all; so that these objects of former terror and uncertainty are now to the true disciple of Christ matter of joy and exultation!

And how could Abraham's bosom, the region of the blessed, be other than a state of enjoyment to the Christian? There we shall see Lazarus and be comforted with him! There we shall see father Abraham, and rest from all our sorrows, reclining on his bosom! There we shall see the ancient patriarchs and prophets! There we shall see Jeremiah, who wept over the desolations of Israel, and Daniel who in defiance of the king and all his nobles prayed three times a day to his God, and whom his God saved from the mouth of the lions! There we shall find the apostles and Luther and Calvin and Zuinglius and all that host of worthies of whom the world was not worthy, who amid a wicked and perverse generation, maintained their fidelity to the end, and

received not the mark of the beast. How can the place of departed spirits fail to be a place of joy to the Christian, for there he shall meet all those pious relatives and friends, whom heaven indulgent gave to him awhile and heaven mysterious soon resumed again? But above all, there we shall be with Christ! with him who bought us with his blood, and then went before us to prepare this very mansion for us in his Father's house! who uttered those delightful words "yet a little while and ye shall not see me, and again yet a little while and ye shall see me!" To feel the sacred presence of our Lord is the Christian's highest joy in life—and how do we sing, and how do we pray, and how do we read and meditate on his word—all that we may draw near to him, that he may reveal himself unto us as he does not unto the world, and there we shall be with him, not only for a few hours, but evermore:

O glorious rest! O blest abode!
I shall be near and like my God!
And flesh and sense no more controul
The sacred pleasures of the soul!

But alas! the same parable affords us a dreadful counterpart to this pleasing picture. "The rich man died and was buried, and in hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments—and he cried and said, father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." And there too, even in the judgment of the most expanded charity, it must be feared, awoke Voltaire and found himself tormented in the flame, and Paine and Rosseau and all the Iscariot band, who denied the Lord that bought them! There they gnash their teeth, and gnaw their tongues in anguish, and feel the weight of the wrath of that Jesus, whose kingdom they vainly attempted to crush! Better had it been for them that before they wrote their infidel productions, a millstone had been hanged about their necks and they plunged into the bottomless sea!

Better had they died from the womb, and given up the ghost as soon as they were born! Better had they never known a mother's care, and been thrown out to perish! For then they should have been still and been quiet, then would they have slept and been at rest. "But now they long for death and it cometh not—and the thing which, especially Voltaire in his dying hours, greatly feared, has come upon them." Such, in a degree proportioned to the relative magnitude of their guilt, will be the lot of all who die unreconciled to God!

e) Nevertheless the sacred volume represents the state of departed spirits as *not exactly the same as after the Judgment day.* For aught we know, they may be in the same place in which they shall always be. But the circumstances of their state are somewhat different. In hades the righteous will be in the joyful *expectation* of the sentence of acquittal; after judgment they enter on the eternal inheritance which the judge apportions for them. The wicked in hades are under the fearful and tormenting apprehension of the dreadful sentence to be pronounced upon them; after judgment they shall be doomed to the actual and full misery of their fate, or in the figurative language of scripture, be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone! The phraseology of the sentence too, as given us by our Saviour himself, seems to teach the same idea. To those on his right hand, the judge shall say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," not, "return to that enjoyment which ye have had since ye arrived in the world of spirits." And to those on the left he shall say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,"[1] not, "return to it."

But the general nature of the happiness of the righteous and the misery of the wicked in hades, may be and probably is

[1] Matth. 25: 34. 41.

the same in kind, though not equal in degree, to that which awaits them after judgment.

f) Again; *We enter into hades*, or the place of departed spirits, *immediately after death*.

No reason can be assigned, why any delay should take place between death and the entrance of the soul in its future abode. And the woru of God expressly teaches, that none occurs. "This day," said our Saviour to the thief upon the cross, "thou shalt be with me in paradise." Paul desired to be absent from the body, because he then would be present with the Lord.—The angel in the Revelation of St. John pronounced the dead who die in the Lord, blessed immediately after death, "from thenceforth." And when the rich man died he awoke in hades and found that Lazarus was already there. Some have supposed that even before the final dissolution, the soul sometimes makes a flight and returns. Some dying persons have professed peculiar visions or trances. As soon therefore as the connexion between soul and body is dissolved, the spirit enters on this state of new and untried being! Yes, in that solemn hour, when the house, in which the lifeless body lies, is enveloped in mourning; when friends and relatives are weeping over their loss, and now and then go through the silent room to cast once more a look of anguish at the form they loved—whilst the shroud, the last garment to be worn in this world, is preparing—whilst the sexton is digging the grave—whilst the joiner, in his shop, is busily hammering away at the coffin—then the disembodied spirit has either found its long sought rest, that only heaven for which it longed, in the Redeemer's breast; or it has awaked in torment, and found, alas too late! that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!"

It appears then, that according to the sacred volume, the state of departed spirits is substantially the same before as after the great day of judgment, differing only in some of its circum-

stances, and probably also in degree both of happiness and misery.

III. The Resurrection.

The scriptures teach us, that God will hereafter raise[1] the bodies of all men and unite them to the souls by which they were formerly inhabited. The possibility of a resurrection has sometimes been disputed by infidels both ancient and modern. But in the eloquent language of the apostle of the Gentiles it may be asked, Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? Surely he, who originally formed our bodies, out of dust, could build them up again out of their constituent materials. Reason indeed could not have discovered this doctrine. When Paul delivered his discourse before the Athenians,[2] and preached to them Jesus and the resurrection, they called him a babbler, and said, Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears. Not only had this doctrine been unknown to the Stoics and Epicureans whom Paul addressed; it was hooted at by other sects, even by those who strenuously maintained the immortality of the soul. The body was regarded by them as the exclusive seat of corruption, as the prison-house of the soul; and Celsus not only regarded this doctrine with contempt, but stigmatized it as "the hope of worms." Yet, surely, as revealed in the gospel there is nothing unreasonable or undignified in this doctrine. Yea, must it not be a pleasing reflection to the Christian, that the body which he has so long inhabited, shall rise again from the grave, purified from every thing corruptible or sinful about it? That this mortal shall put on immortality and these old companions soul and body, who have so long shared each other's pains and pleasures, shall again be united and

[1] Acts 26: 8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?

[2] Acts 17: 18. &c.

prove a source of augmented enjoyment? No, it is a glorious hope of the Christian that no part of him will fall a final prey to death, save that which ought to die, the imperfection, the corruption of his nature. It is a glorious hope, that with pious Job he can exclaim, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day on the earth; and though worms destroy this body, *yet in my flesh shall* I see God.[1] a) The certainty of this doctrine is established not only by unequivocal passages[2] of the sacred volume, but also by the examples of resurrection in the case of Lazarus,[3] of the widow's son at Nain,[4] and of the Lord Jesus himself.

b) The scriptures also teach the *identity* of the risen body with that which was laid in the grave. Christ explicitly teaches that "all those *who were in their graves*, shall come forth."[5] By this cannot be meant that all the particles which ever constituted part of the body will then be included in it, for the constituent particles of our bodies are constantly changing through life, and if all collected together would constitute several such bodies as ours. The apostle clearly informs us that "all flesh is not the same flesh," that there are "celestial bodies" as well as "terrestrial," and that the body which like seed is sown and dies in the earth, is not exactly that body which shall be, but

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[1] Job 19: 25.

[2] John 5: 28. 29. Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. John 11: 25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live.

[3] John 11: 43. 44. And when he had thus spoken he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and feet with grave clothes, &c.

[4] Luke 7: 11—15. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. See also, Matth. 27: 52. 27: 6. Heb. 11: 5. 2 Kings 2: 11.

[5] John 5: 28. 29.

God giveth to every seed his own body.[1] Moreover, a body like ours, subject to constant decay, would be unfit for the habitation of an immortal and ever vigorous spirit. From all these circumstances it would appear, that our bodies will in death experience a very great change, and rise as diverse from our present bodies as the stock of grain is from the seed whence it sprang: and yet, that as the stock of grain proceeded from the seed, and derived its essential structure and properties from it; so the future body will still embrace the *essential elements* of the present, so modified as to suit their eternal destination, and yet retain a just basis of identity. The nature of these essential elements is unknown to us and beyond the reach of philosophy.

This identity is also evident, because we are told that our bodies will *rise again*, and not that new ones will be created: and because we are told that Christ will change *our body*,[2] not create others.

c) The *reasons* why the Author of our being will raise our bodies at the latter day, are various. No doubt the soul united to such a glorified, incorruptible body, will be better adapted for that particular state of reward and punishment which God has appointed for them. The precise nature of that state we know not, but it is obviously possible that as the joys of heaven and the torments of hell will in part at least be the natural effects of habits of virtue or vice in this world, there might be peculiar propriety in the resurrection of the body. It it possible too that the soul of man, when united to some organic body, is capable of higher degrees of pleasure and of pain than in its disembodied state. And may not this fact be the reason, why in the intermediate state between death and judgment, the righteous and the wicked neither enjoy as great a degree of pleasure nor suffer as poignant pain as they will after judgment, when their bodies will again be united to them? A union of

[1] 1 Cor. 15: the whole chapter. v. 38. [2] Philip. 3: 21.

the soul with a body also capacitates it for certain virtues or vices, by the restraint or indulgence of the bodily passions, which would be impossible to a disembodied spirit.

The day and hour of this resurrection knoweth no man,[1] though they are doubtless fixed by God. We know it will be at the end of the world, and prior to the judgment. The prophetical data of the sacred volume may perhaps, when fully understood, determine the precise time of this awful event; and several general signs of the times are given in the sacred volume. We know, that there will be a "falling away first, and that the man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition."[2] How interesting will be the scene, when the voice of the archangel shall sound, and the all-alarming clangor of his trumpet reverberate throughout the earth; when the graves, and charnel houses will rattle with the stirring dead, when the ocean will heave and throw up the bodies buried in her bosom; when nations under ground bestir themselves and arise to judgment! How august will be the appearance of the Judge, coming in the clouds of heaven, surrounded by his mighty angels; and how different the feelings of those who come forth to the resurrection of life, and those unhappy beings who lived and died enemies to God, and now come to the resurrection of damnation! Reader, now in thy day of grace enquire, with which of these classes will thy lot be cast? Will thy renovated body but prove the channel of augmented suffering to thee, or hast thou given up thy members as instruments of righteousness, and thy body as a temple for the Holy Ghost?

IV. Final Judgment.

To the resurrection of the dead will succeed the general judgment. a) Every fact which tends to establish the exist-

[1] Matth. 24: 36. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Acts 1: 7. 2 Pet. 3. 10.

[2] 2 Thess. 2: 3. 1 Thess. 4: 16.

ence of a moral government in the world, also affords proof of a future retribution in which the inequalities of the present administration will be equalized. And it is but meet that this award should be preceded by a public rehearsal of each individual's case. Reason could not discover the doctrine of a formal judgment. It was brought to light by the scriptures, and in them it is abundantly taught. Paul inculcates it in his speech before the intelligent and polished citizens of Athens. "God," says he, "has appointed *a day* in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." Yes, the man of Calvary will be the judge of all the earth! He, in whom God was manifest, and humbled himself so low, will be thus gloriously exalted, and sit in judgment on an assembled universe! Then will be summoned before him also all his foes, and be at least compelled to worship him, from whose head they vainly attempted to strike the crown. Before this tribunal you, reader, and I must also appear; for we must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

b) At what *time* this awful scene will take place, we know not. But the day is fixed, "for God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world." Probably it will be sooner than we expect; for "it cometh as a thief in the night." The world will be immersed in wickedness, as in the time when Noah entered the ark. The glorious influence of the millennium will have in a great measure ceased, Satan shall be again let loose for a season on the earth,[1] and "the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, will be gathered together to battle against the followers of the Lamb. The earth will be buried in violence, lust, and total security, when the great day of God Almighty comes. The last sun has run its course, and set in darkness on the earth forever.

c) Then shall the Son of man appear in the clouds of heav-

[1] Rev. 20: 7. 8. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

en, surrounded by the mighty angels at midnight, when mankind are wrapped in sleep. He will shed forth from his own person, a light exceeding far the splendor of the sun, a light that shall penetrate the universe and render visible not only the thousands of nations and generations then assembling before the Judge, but also their secret thoughts: a light that will like an arrow transfix with terror the heart of every sinner, and thrill with humble joy to the true believer. Then will the Judge unfold the book of his omniscience, and exhibit to an assembled universe its appalling contents. Alas, what discoveries will then be made! What scenes of midnight revelry and debauchery and murder will be brought to light! When all these, together with the wars and blood-shed to which the sinful passions of men have led, are reviewed in the light of eternity, truly their record will look like the annals of hell and the biography of devils! Reader, how will your secret life appear?

d) The *law* by which the different subjects of God's moral government will be judged, will be the degree of light enjoyed by them in the world. The heathen will be judged by the law of nature,[1] and Jews and Christians by the revelation they possessed. And now will the Judge enter on the work of retribution, and reward each one according to his work! Reader, dost thou belong to the children of God? Hear the delightful plaudit, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!*[2] Then wilt thou be admitted into that city which has no need of a temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it; and which has no need of the sun, neither the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

[1] Rom. 2: 12. For as many as have sinned without the (written) law, shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned under the law, shall be judged by the law.

[2] Matth. 25: 34.

But do you belong to the enemies of God? You too must be rewarded according to your works. You have rejected the Saviour, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing; and therefore that blood cannot be applied to cancel your sins. You have rejected the only days-man betwixt God and you, and therefore must meet the wrath of your offended Judge in the nakedness of your own guilt. To you and all the assembled enemies of God, the Judge will say, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,*[1] and thus your eternal state be unchangeably fixed.

e) Then will sentence also be passed on the devils, who kept not their first estate, and whom God had reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day.[2] The peculiar circumstances of their transgression, and the process of judgment in reference to them, is indeed not known to us, but the fact that they will also be summoned to the judgment, is clearly revealed. We know that they, like men, were moral agents, and therefore will be judged for their voluntary conduct in reference to the will of God as made known to them.

f) After the judgment is closed, the conflagration of the earth will follow. Flaming fire from the presence of the Almighty Judge, will sweep in one continued volume over our globe, enveloping the stately tower, the magnificent palace, and the humble cot in one indiscriminate conflagration. The elements will be consumed with fervent heat, the earth will melt,[3]

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[1] Matth. 25: 35.

[2] Jude v. 6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. 2 Peter 2: 4. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

[3] 2 Peter 3: 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. v. 12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens be-

the atmosphere around it will catch the flame and be converted into one body of liquid fire. Thus, "the heavens," the visible concave surrounding our earth, "will flee away from the face of him that sitteth on the throne; and no place be found for them any more!" "Seeing then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons," reader, "ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness."[1]

In regard to this final catastrophe a diversity of opinion has existed. Some have supposed that this conflagration will involve in its train the sun, moon, planets, and fixed stars; in short, all the thousands of worlds that exist in the universal empire of Jehovah.

Others, we think with more propriety, confine its effects to the destruction of our own globe; because the judgment to which it is an appendage, refers, mainly, to the human race. The affairs of this earth will then be brought to a close; but the separate existence of other worlds may not be affected by it. Our earth and perhaps its moon, will be stricken out of the vast concave of heavenly luminaries; but the solar system will move on uninterrupted, and the loss of this little speck in creation perhaps not be noticed by the inmates of other worlds!

Some have supposed that our earth will be annihilated, whilst others have more plausibly maintained that it will be transformed into a new heaven and new earth.

V. *Happiness of the righteous after Judgment.*

The abode of the righteous subsequently to the solemnities of the judgment day, is designated by various names, such as heaven, paradise, our heavenly Father's house, the rest that re-

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ing on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

[1] 2 Peter 3: 11.

maineth, &c. and their happiness in it is termed, eternal life,[1] an incorruptible inheritance,[2] eternal salvation,[3] &c.

The nature of their happiness cannot perhaps be fully comprehended by us in this life, although much may be learned from the numerous representations of the sacred volume.

I. The state of the righteous after judgment is represented as having *locality*, being a place. This is evident even from the several names applied to it in scripture. Probably it is the same *place* in which they had dwelt prior to judgment; or perhaps the sphere of their agency and enjoyment is now far more extensive, *pervading the immense regions of Jehovah's kingdom.*

Michaelis[4] supposed the renovated earth to be the destined future abode of the blessed. Pfaffius[5] believed heaven to be in the bosom of God himself, where the angels and the spirits of the just made perfect would enjoy eternal rest.

II. The nature of the future blessedness of the saints is known to us but in part. It will consist of an entire absence of all pain, sickness or want, and the positive enjoyment of the bliss prepared for those who love God.

a) The saints will derive new capacities for holy action and enjoyment, from their union with the *resuscitated, glorified*[6] *body.* How much the action and enjoyment of the soul depends on the organization and health of the body even in this life is

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[1] Matth. 25: 46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

[2] 1 Pet. 1: 4. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

[3] Heb. 5: 6. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation, unto all them that obey him.

[4] Michaelis Dogmatik, p. 589.

[5] C. M. Pfaffii, Dis. de cœlo beatorum.

[6] Phil. 3: 21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

well known. But in heaven the exalted spirit will never be retarded in its movements by any defect or disorder of its bodily organs. On the contrary, the superior refinement and perfection of the organs, will add correspondent perfection to the operations of the soul. The properties of this glorified body being different from those of what we term matter, human language contained no words properly to designate them. The apostle, therefore, in the language of approximation, terms it a *spiritual body*.[1] This literally would mean *mental matter*, and be a contradiction in terms; but all will understand the apostle to mean, that the risen body will be so much more refined and elevated in nature, as to bear more resemblance to a spirit than to any other known object. It is also termed a celestial,[2] an incorruptible, an immortal[3] body. This body will doubtless have different and more numerous organs of sense than had the earthly. Among the animals known to us some have fewer senses than man, and some possess one or other of the senses in a much higher degree than he. It is analogous then to expect that in his union with the heavenly body man will have more and higher senses than are now known to us.

b) In death too the spirit will be freed from all that *intellectual imbecility* derived from the dominion of sin. That the apostasy of our first parents, and the disordered frame with which we are now born, have very much abridged the intellectual power of man, admits of no doubt. But in eternity the soul will commence its career anew, with powers of intellect equal at least to the developed faculties of a Newton or a Leibnitz. Now we

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[1] 1 Cor 15: 44. It is sown a natural body, and it is raised a *spiritual body*. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.

[2] v. 40. There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

[3] v. 53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

see as through a glass darkly; but then, face to face; now we know in part, but then we shall know even as we are known.[1]

c) The moral character of the soul will be entire and perfect. Every tendency to sin will have been completely eradicated. Every thing like envy, hatred, malice and all other painful affections of the soul will be unknown, and love to God and love to the creatures he has made will throb in our bosoms and fill us with delight. Nothing is more fully established by the uniform experience of Christians than the fact, that those feelings of benevolence, charity, humility, and in short all the graces of the Christian character, tend to tranquillize the soul and raise it above the vicissitudes of time, and fill it with joy. In heaven and throughout eternity these dispositions will have full scope and will be productive in the highest degree of their natural and appropriate effects.

d) In heaven the soul will enjoy the society of angels and their blessed God and Redeemer. The happiness of our social intercourse on earth is not without alloy; for the best of human beings are sanctified but in part, and occasionally under the influence of error and sin. And where there is sin there must be suffering. But in those abodes of bliss, the Christian will be entirely free from sin himself, and find himself surrounded with equally holy and happy spirits, will be in the presence of his Saviour and his God. There he will enjoy the pleasures which flow from the society of perfectly holy spirits, and uniting in ascriptions of praise to him who bought them with his blood, and made them kings and priests unto God.

III. The *gradations* of this felicity are various. That this will be the case seems to be a necessary consequence of the fact that in this life man is a moral agent, under probation, and in a moral government, and that eternity is the appointed time of retribution. But it is moreover clearly taught in the sacred vol-

[1] 1 Cor 12: 13.

ume. For although the salvation of believers is of grace and not of works, yet are we expressly told, that they will be rewarded according to their works. All the inhabitants of heaven will be entirely and exclusively happy; yet, as they have acquired different degrees of capacity for celestial enjoyment, they will indeed drink at the same exhaustless fountain, and all be filled, but contain different measures according to the different desires and susceptibilities of each.[1]

IV. The felicity of heaven will be *eternal* and *progressive*. The eternity of heaven is clearly taught in the sacred volume,[2] and is not disputed. That the happiness of the righteous will be eternally progressive is also evident. a) Because, as holy action on earth increased the capacity of saints for the enjoyments of heaven, no reason can be assigned why the continuance of such action under more favourable circumstances, should not still more augment that capacity. b) Again, the desires of the soul for enjoyment are ever unsatisfied, or at least seem constantly tending to increase, in this life, and probably will continue to do so in that which is to come. c) The soul cannot be stationary in any of its capacities for enjoyment as well as action, but must be ever either progressive, or retrograde. But in heaven there will be no backsliding. Hence, as the capacity for enjoyment will be progressive, and the fountain for its gratification at the throne of God is inexhaustible, an evergrowing happiness will necessarily follow.

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[1] 1 Cor. 3: 8. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour. 2 Cor. 5: 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Rom. 2: 5—7. Luke 19: 17. And he said unto him, well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. v. 18—27.

[2] Matth. 26: 46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

Yes, the believer may cherish the pleasing belief, that his happiness, which commenced in this world, and though not unalloyed, rendered life highly desirable to him, will continue, yea, eternally increase in the world to come. A Voltaire or a Paine might well wish to get rid of his immortality—might envy the lot of the brutes that perish in death; for they have spurned the mercy of God, they have imprecated the vengeance of the Almighty, and have nothing to hope, and every thing to fear from eternity. But the sincere disciple of Christ, may well regard his immortality as one of the dearest features of his future hopes. Being the follower of him, who said "I am the resurrection and the life, if any man believe in me, though he die yet shall he live;" he sees before him the prospect of ceaseless and evergrowing felicity. Delightful it must have been for him, to awake in the eternal world, and find himself in Abraham's bosom, to look back for the first time on death as a something past; still more delightful is it now, since the solemnities of the judgment are over, to hear the welcome plaudit, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of thy Lord, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Does he now find himself in the society of Jesus and the blessed angels, and his old acquaintances and friends on earth? The very zest of his felicity will be, that there he will dwell forever. Does he find himself satisfied with the image of his God? He will continue to grow more and more like him, and better satisfied, that is, more happy for ever! Is he growing in intellect and knowledge, does he find himself able to comprehend even in physical and intellectual science ten thousand things which were mysteries to him here? Does he soon occupy the station which he had here in imagination assigned to the tallest archangel next the Almighty's throne? He knows, that he will continue thus to increase throughout eternity, and standing on this exalted eminence, he will look back and see the volume of divine providence

unfolding before his eyes in all its latitude and relations; see the wisdom of those dispensations which seemed inexplicable to him on earth, the benevolence of those which appeared most unequal and severe. But the feeling which will there absorb all others, and throughout eternity fill the breasts of the saints in heaven, will be the most intense adoration and gratitude to that Lamb of God, who purchased them with his own blood, and to whom they are indebted for those streams of never ending bliss in which they bathe their souls. Dear reader, will you be among that blessed throng? Or are you treading under foot that precious blood, in which those now standing before his face, had "washed their robes and made them white?"

VI. *The Punishment of the Wicked.*

After the solemnities of the Judgment are closed, the wicked also will be consigned to their state of endless misery, which is termed "second death,"[1] "destruction,"[2] "punishment,"[3] "perdition,"[4] "the burning lake,"[5] &c.

I. Their state, like that of the righteous, is represented as having *locality*. This opinion has been generally entertained in the Christian church, although Origen among the ancients, as well as Dœderlein and others among the moderns, maintained that it is only a state. Where the place appointed for the punishment of the wicked will be, whether in the centre of our earth, or in some planet, or elsewhere, we know not.

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[1] Rev. 21: 8. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the *lake that burneth with fire and brimstone*; which is the *second death*. See 2: 11. 20: 6. 14.

[2] 2 Thess. 1: 9.

[3] Matth. 25: 46.

[4] Matth. 7: 13. *απωλεια.*

[5] See No. 1.

II. The sufferings of the wicked will be both bodily[1] and mental; and will consist in a) a consciousness of guilt. The solemnities of the judgment day will produce in the condemned deep conviction of the justice of their sentence, and the moral turpitude of their own hearts. b) They will be tormented by the conviction, that they have had heaven within their reach, that its blessings were actually provided for them too, and offered to them with as much sincerity as to those who accepted them, but that now they are forever lost! c) They will recollect with pain the numerous sermons they heard and heeded not; the earnest, affectionate entreaties of their ministers, which they treated with total disregard; the urgent solicitations of their pious friends, who oft entreated them to be reconciled to God, but in vain; they will recollect the strivings of God's spirit with them, and the deep and solemn convictions which he sometimes wrought in their souls, thus bringing salvation nigh to them. These influences they resisted, saying to the Holy Comforter, depart from me, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways! d) Their souls will be harrowed up by the conviction, that all their hopes are now forever lost, their doom irrevocably fixed.[2] There are many sufferings incident to human life, which are tolerable only because they are believed to be of short duration. Tell the wretched sufferer screaming under the tortures of the stone, or the agonies and pangs of the confirmed tic doloreaux, that these sufferings he must endure throughout millions and millions of years, and if he believed you he would be driven to furious despair. What then must be the horror of the damned,

[1] Luke 16: 23—26. And in hell he (the rich man) lifted up his eyes being *in torments*, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for *I am tormented in this flame.*

[2] Luke 16. And beside all this, between us and you there is a *great gulf fixed;* so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot; *neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.*

when they realize the dreadful anticipation, that their pangs, not unlike those of "burning fire" and "gnawing worms," will endure forever! e) The torments of the accursed will probably consist in part of raging desires and lusts,[1] forever denied gratification. f) Probably too, they may have a glance at the blissful scenes of heaven, as had the rich man at Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and feel the more deeply the extent of their loss. g) Much of their misery will arise from their confinement with devils,[2] and other malicious, damned spirits; whose very depravity makes them seek a fiendlike pleasure in tormenting each other! h) But the certainty of their wretchedness is placed beyond all doubt, because they will be shut out in regions of outer darkness, far from the presence of God and the glory of his power. What more terrific horrors can be imagined than must result from the dread combination of all these sources! Yet all these are the natural fruits of sin, independently of any positive punishment, which a righteous God may see fit to inflict!

III. *The duration of these torments is beyond all doubt represented as eternal.*

The eternity of future blessedness is not disputed, although that of future punishment has been; yet they rest on precisely the same evidence. Happiness has no more tendency to confer eternity, than misery to take it away. Both rest on the testimony of God's word. a) Express and literal passages are found teaching, that the pains of the accursed are "*eternal*,"[3]

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[1] Rev. 22: 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous let him be righteous still; and he that is holy let him be holy still.

[2] Matth. 25: 45. 46. Then shall he say to them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared *for the devil and his angels.*

[3] Mark 3: 29. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but in danger of eternal damnation.

are "*everlasting*," [1] and continue "*for ever and ever.*" [2] b) The same doctrine is conveyed in figurative language of various and unequivocal import, teaching the eternity of future punishment. It is termed "the unquenchable fire," "the worm that dieth not," [3] and the lake of fire and brimstone, in which Satan and his angels are "tormented day and night, forever and ever." [4] There is moreover reason to believe that the accursed will forever remain enemies of God; and, therefore, eternally deserve, and receive punishment. The scriptures never even intimate, that the flames of hell will be purgative, sanative or remedial in their influence, but always describe them as penal and retributive. Nor is it inconsistent with the love of God to punish sinners eternally: for they had a fair term of probation, were often entreated to be reconciled to God, and would not. The good of the moral universe therefore requires, that the penalty of the law be inflicted on them, that others may fear and not fall into like condemnation. c) The devils in hell did not regard their torments as temporary, or express the least hope of deliverance. d) Nor did the rich man cherish any such expectation.

The penalties of the divine government, like those of good

[1] Matth. 25: 46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. Dan. 12: 2. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life; and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 2 Thess. 1: 9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.

[2] Rev. 14: 11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest, day nor night, who worship the beast and his image.

[3] Mark 9: 43. 44. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.

[4] Rev. 20: 10. And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever.

civil polities on earth, are appointed not to satisfy the vengeance of the lawgiver, but by preventing transgression, and promoting virtue, to secure the highest happiness of the moral universe. Would any man, when passing some prison of our land, infer from it the cruelty of our lawgivers? Or if you beheld a murderer on the gallows, writhing in the agonies of death, would you believe that our rulers are tyrants, that some reckless impulses of vengeance had erected the instrument of torture? No, we all know, that the attachment of just penalties to laws, is a necessary part of a good government, and tends to ensure security of person and property: yea, that it is not only consistent with true benevolence, but actually dictated by it, in order to secure the highest good of the moral universe, and also of the criminal himself. As long as there was any hope for the sinner, these very penalties exerted a salutary influence on him, by retarding his career of iniquity and ruin.

That the punishments of the divine government will be found just, we must necessarily infer from the infinite perfection of God who appointed them.

Of their real magnitude, or of what justice would in any case demand, we are totally incompetent judges, because of our very inadequate views of the evil of sin in the divine government.

It is found that even the dread of eternal punishment, cannot prevent the mass of mankind from frequent transgression of the divine law: how entirely inefficient would milder punishments have been? The legitimate effect of a disbelief of future punishment is witnessed in the beastly and inhuman scenes of revolutionary France.

It should moreover ever be remembered, that if sin were not so great an evil, as to merit and require the severe punishments threatened in God's word; its existence could not be so highly detrimental to the happiness of the universe, nor its prevention an object of such great importance as to require the menace of

such dread penalties, even if God were "man that he could lie," and did not intend to execute them.

Rather let us receive the declarations of our heavenly Father, on this as on all other subjects, with submission and holy awe; confidently believing that all "his judgments are just and righteous," and striving by an immediate surrender of our hearts to him, or if we are his true children, by a daily renewal of our dedication to his service, to escape his righteous displeasure, and through the merits of our crucified Redeemer, secure his favour which is life, and his loving kindness which is better than life.

ARTICLE XVIII.

Of Free Will.

Concerning free will our churches teach, that the human will possesses some liberty for the performance of civil duties, and for the choice of those things lying within the controul of reason. But it does not possess the power, without the influence of the Holy Spirit, of being just before God, or yielding spiritual obedience: for the natural man receiveth not the things which are of the Spirit of God: but this is accomplished in the heart, when the Holy Spirit is received through the word.

The subject of this Article, which with more propriety might have been entitled the Inability of man to fulfil the divine law without the aid of the Holy Spirit, has received some attention in the discussion of Art. IV and V.

The additional clause of this article, containing a reference to Augustine's works and exemplifications of the doctrine above stated, is omitted in this, as it is in many other versions; as also the clause rejecting dissentient opinions.

ARTICLE XIX.

Of the Author of Sin.

On this subject they teach, that although God is the creator and preserver of universal nature; the cause of sin must be sought in the depraved will of the devil and wicked men, which when destitute of divine aid, turns itself away from God: agreeably to the declaration of Christ, When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own. John 8: 44.

The subject of this article also, was anticipated in Proposition IV. of Decrees and Providence of God.

ARTICLE XX.

Of Good Works.

Our (writers) are falsely accused of prohibiting good works. Their publications on the ten commandments and other similar subjects, show, that they gave good instructions concerning all the different stations and duties of life, and explained what course of conduct in any particular calling, is pleasing to God. Concerning these things preachers formerly said very little, but urged the necessity of puerile and useless works, such as certain holydays, fasts, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, worship of saints, rosaries, monastic vows, &c. These useless things, our adversaries, having been admonished, no longer teach as formerly. Moreover they now begin to make mention of faith, about which they formerly observed a marvellous silence. They now teach that we are not justified by works alone, but join faith to works, and maintain that we are justified by faith and works. This doctrine is more tolerable than their former belief, and is calculated to impart more consolation to the mind.

Inasmuch, then, as the doctrine concerning faith, which should be regarded as a principal one by the church, had so long been unknown; for all

must confess, that concerning the righteousness of faith, the most profound silence reigned in their sermons, and the doctrine concerning works alone was discussed in the churches; our divines have admonished the churches as follows:

First, that our works cannot reconcile us to God, or merit the remission of sins, or grace, or justification: but this we can attain only by faith, when we believe that we are accepted by grace, for Christ's sake, who alone is appointed our mediator and propitiatory sacrifice, by which the Father is reconciled. He, therefore, who expects to merit grace by his works, casts contempt on the merits of Christ, and is seeking the way to God, in his own strength, without the Saviour; who nevertheless has told us, I am the way, the truth and the life.

This doctrine concerning faith, is incessantly inculcated by the Apostle Paul. Ephes. 2. Ye are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, &c.

And lest any one should cavil at our interpretation and charge it with novelty, we state that this whole matter is supported by the testimony of the Fathers. For Augustine devotes several volumes to the defence of grace, and the righteousness of faith, in opposition to the merit of good works. And Ambrosius, on the calling of the Gentiles, &c. inculcates the same doctrine.

But although this doctrine is despised by the ignorant; the consciences of the pious and timid find it a source of much consolation, for they cannot attain tranquillity in any works, but in faith alone, when they entertain the confident belief that, for Christ's sake, God is reconciled to them. Thus Paul teaches us Rom. 5. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. This whole doctrine must be referred to the conflict in the conscience of the alarmed sinner, nor can it be otherwise understood. Hence the ignorant and worldly minded are much mistaken, who vainly imagine that the righteousness of the Christian is nothing else than what in common life and in the language of philosophy is termed morality.

Formerly the consciences of men were harassed by the doctrine of works, nor did they receive any consolation from the gospel. Some followed the dictates of conscience into deserts, and into monasteries; hoping there to merit the divine favour by a monastic life. Others invented different kinds of works, to merit grace, and make satisfaction for their sins. There was therefore the utmost necessity, that this doctrine concerning faith in Christ, should be inculcated anew; in order that timid minds might find consolation, and know, that justification and the remission of sins, are obtained by faith in the Saviour.

The people are also now instructed, that faith

does not signify a mere historical belief, such as wicked men and devils have; but that in addition to a historical belief, it includes an acquaintance with the consequences of the history, such as remission of sins, by grace through Christ, righteousness, &c. &c.

Now he who knows that the Father is reconciled to him through the Son, possesses a true acquaintance with God, confides in his providence and calls upon his name: and is therefore not without God, as are the Gentiles. For the devil and wicked men cannot believe the article concerning the remission of sins. But they hate God as an enemy, do not call upon his name, nor expect any thing good at his hands. Augustine, in speaking of the word faith, admonishes the reader that in scripture this word does not signify mere knowledge, such as wicked men possess, but that confidence or trust by which alarmed sinners are comforted and lifted up.

We moreover teach that the performance of good works is necessary, because it is commanded of God, and not because we expect to merit grace by them. Pardon of sins and grace are obtained only by faith. And because the Holy Spirit is received by faith; the heart of man is renovated and new affections produced, that he may be able to perform good works. Accordingly Ambrosius states, faith is the source of holy volitions and

an upright life. For the faculties of man, unaided by the Holy Spirit, are replete with sinful propensities, and too feeble to perform works that are good in the sight of God. They are moreover under the influence of Satan, who urges men to various crimes, and impious opinions and manifest offences; as may be seen in the examples of the philosophers who though they endeavoured to lead perfectly moral lives, failed to accomplish their design, and were guilty of many notorious crimes. Such is the imbecility of man, when he undertakes to govern himself by his own strength, without faith and the Holy Spirit.

From all this it is manifest, that our doctrine, instead of deserving censure for the prohibition of good works, ought much rather to be applauded, for teaching the manner in which truly good works can be performed. For without faith, human nature is incapable of performing the duties either of the first or second table. Without it, man does not call upon God, nor expect any thing from him, but seeks refuge amongst men and reposes on human aid. Hence, when faith and confidence in God are wanting, all evil desires and human schemes reign in the heart; as Christ says, Without me ye can do nothing, John 15., and the church responds, Without thy favour, there is nothing good in man.

The subject of this article has been discussed under the head of Justification, and the several parts of Christian duty.

ARTICLE XXI.

Of the Invocation of Saints.

Concerning the invocation of saints our churches teach, that the saints ought to be held in remembrance, in order that we may, each in his own calling, imitate their faith and good works; that the emperor may imitate the example of David, in carrying on war to expel the Turks from our country; for both are kings. But the sacred volume does not teach us to invoke saints or to seek aid from them. For it proposes Christ to us as our only Mediator, propitiation, highpriest and intercessor. On his name we are to call, and he promises, that he will hear our prayers, and highly approves of this worship, viz. that he should be called upon in every affliction, 1 John 2: If any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father, &c.

This is the substance of our doctrines, from which it is evident, that they contain nothing inconsistent with the scriptures, or opposed either to the Catholic (universal,) or to the Roman church, so far as they accord with scripture. Under these circumstances, those certainly judge harshly, who would have us regarded as heretics. But the difference of opinion between us relates to certain abuses, which have crept into the churches without any good authority; in regard to which, if we do differ, the bishops ought to treat with lenity and tolerate us, on account of the confession, which we have just made. For, even the canons of the church are not so rigid, as to require every where a uniformity of rites; nor have the rites of all the churches ever been the same. Nevertheless, the ancient rites of the church we have in general carefully retained. For it is a slanderous charge, that all the ancient customs and institutions are abolished in our churches. But there was a general complaint, that some abuses had crept into the customary rites; and these, because we could not with a good conscience retain them, we have in part corrected.

The subject of the invocation of saints and angels having been discussed under the head of Angels, the reader is referred thither.

In their concluding remarks the Confessors term these articles *fere summa doctrinae*, (pretty much the substance of our doctrines,) thus intimating that they did not present it as a complete system of divinity, and implying that in some non-essential points they may hereafter find it necessary to make additional changes. This was in fact done in some measure by the Reformers themselves; but still more by the different Lutheran churches in the several countries of Europe since that time.

In this conclusion as well as the last several articles of the Confession, the Latin copy from which we translate, differs somewhat from the German.

The Corruptions in the Catholic Church, which the Reformers corrected.

In addition to the preceding Confession of their faith, the Confessors also submitted to the Diet a list of the corruptions which had crept into the Roman church and which had been corrected by them. As this list of abuses corrected, is seldom found annexed to the modern editions of the Confessions, and will moreover not be entirely superfluous at the present day, we here present them to the American reader, from the authentic German edition of Dr. Baumgarten.

CHAPTER I.

Of Communion in one kind.

As there is nothing contained in the doctrines of our churches, inconsistent with scripture, or with the Catholic church; and as we have merely rejected certain abuses, some of which had in the course of time crept into the church, whilst others were forcibly introduced into it; necessity demands that we should give some account of them, and assign the reasons which induced us to admit the alterations, in order that your imperial majesty may perceive that nothing was done in this matter in an unchristian or presumptuous manner, but that we were compelled to admit these alterations by the word of God which is justly to be held in higher regard than any customs of the church.

In our churches, communion is administered to the laity in both kinds, because we regard this as a manifest command and precept of Christ, Matth. 26: 27. Drink ye all of it. In this passage Christ teaches, in the plainest terms, that they should all drink out of the cup.

And in order that no one may be able to cavil at these words, and explain them as referring to the clergy alone, Paul informs us, that the entire church at Corinth received the sacrament in both kinds, 1 Cor. 11: 26. And this custom was retained in the church, as is proved by history and the writings of the Fathers. Cyprian frequently mentions the fact that in his day, the cup was given to the laity. St. Jerome also says, the priests, who administer the sacrament, dispense the blood of Christ to the people. And pope Gelasius, himself commanded, that the sacrament should not be divided (distinct. 2. de con-

secrat. cap. comperimus.) There is no canon extant, which commands that one kind alone should be received. Nor can it be ascertained when, or by whom, the custom of receiving bread alone was introduced, although cardinal Cusanus mentions the time when it was approved. Now it is evident, that such a custom, introduced contrary to the divine command, and also in opposition to the ancient canons, is wrong. It was therefore improper to coerce and oppress the conscience of those who wished to receive the sacrament agreeably to the appointment of Christ, and compel them to violate the institution of our Lord. And inasmuch as the dividing of the sacrament is contrary to its institution by Christ, the host is not carried about in procession amongst us.

CHAPTER II.

The Celibacy of the Priests.

There has been general complaint among persons of every rank on account of the scandalous licentiousness and lawless lives of the priests; who were guilty of lewdness, and whose excesses had risen to the highest pitch. In order to put an end to such odious conduct, to adultery, and other lewd practices, several of our ministers have entered the matrimonial state. They themselves declare that in taking this step they were influenced by the dictates of conscience, and a sacred regard for the holy volume, which expressly informs us, that marriage was appointed of God to prevent licentiousness: as Paul says, (1 Cor. 7: 2.,) "To avoid fornication, let every man have his

own wife." Again, "it is better to marry than to burn," (1 Cor. 7: 9,) and according to the declaration of Christ that not all men can receive this word, (Matth. 19: 12.) In this passage Christ himself, who well knew what was in man, declares that few persons are qualified to live in celibacy; for God created us male and female, Gen. 1: 27. And experience has abundantly proved how vain is the attempt to alter the nature or meliorate the character of God's creatures by mere human purposes or vows, without a peculiar gift or grace of God. It is notorious that the effort has been prejudicial to purity of morals; and in how many cases it has occasioned distress of mind, and the most terrific apprehensions of conscience, is known by the confessions of numerous individuals. Since then the word and law of God cannot be altered by human vows or enactments, the priests for this and other reasons have entered into the conjugal state.

It is moreover evident from the testimony of history and the writings of the fathers, that it was customary in former ages for priests and deacons to be married. Hence the injunction of Paul to Timothy, (1 Tim. 3: 2.) A bishop then must be blameless, *the husband of one wife.* It is but four hundred years since the clergy in Germany were compelled by force to abandon the matrimonial life, and submit to a vow of celibacy; and so generally and resolutely did they resist this tyranny, that the archbishop of Maynce, who published this papal edict, was well nigh losing his life in a commotion excited by the measure. And in so precipitate and arbitrary a manner was that decree executed, that the pope not only prohibited all future marriage of the priests, but even cruelly rent asunder the social ties of those who had long been living in the bonds of lawful wedlock, thus violating alike not only the laws of God and the natural and civil rights of the citizen, but even the canons which the popes themselves made, and the decrees of the most celebrated councils!

It is the deliberate and well known opinion of many distinguished, pious and judicious men, that this compulsory celibacy and prohibition of matrimony (which God himself instituted and left optional,) has been productive of no good, but is the prolific source of numerous and abominable vices. Yea, even one of the popes, Pius II, himself declared, as history informs us, that though there may be several reasons why the marriage of priests should be prohibited, there are many more and weightier ones, why it should not. And doubtless this was the deliberate declaration of Pius, who was a sensible and wise man. We would therefore confidently trust, that your Majesty, as a Christian Emperor, will graciously reflect that in these latter days, to which reference is made in the sacred volume, the world has become still more degenerate, and mankind more frail and liable to temptation. It will be well to beware, lest by the prohibition of marriage, licentiousness and vice be promoted in the German States. For on this subject no man can devise better or more salutary laws than those enacted by God, who himself instituted marriage for the promotion of virtue amongst men. The ancient canons also enjoin that the rigour of human enactments must on some subjects be accommodated to the infirmities of human nature, in order to avoid greater evils.

Such a course would in this case be necessary and Christian: for what injury could result to the church, from the marriage of the clergy and others who are to serve in the church? Yea, it is probable that the church will be but imperfectly supplied with ministers, should this rigorous prohibition of marriage be continued.

If therefore it is evident from the divine word and command, that matrimony is lawful in ministers, and history teaches that their practice formerly was conformed to this precept; if it is evident that the vow of celibacy has been productive of the most scandalous and unchristian conduct, of adultery, unheard of licentiousness and other abominable crimes among the clergy, as some

of the dignitaries at Rome have themselves often confessed and lamented; it is a lamentable thing that the Christian estate of matrimony has not only been presumptuously forbidden, but in some places speedy punishment been inflicted, as though it were a heinous crime!

Matrimony is moreover declared a lawful and honourable estate by the laws of your imperial majesty, and by the code of every empire in which justice and law prevailed. Of late, however, innocent subjects, and especially ministers, are cruelly tormented on account of their marriage. Nor is such conduct a violation of the divine laws alone; it is equally opposed to the canons of the church. The apostle Paul denominates that a doctrine of devils which forbids marriage.[1] And Christ says,[2] The devil is a murderer from the beginning. For that may well be regarded as a doctrine of devils which forbids marriage and enforces the prohibition by the shedding of blood.

But as no human law can abrogate or change a command of God, neither can any vows produce this effect. There Cyprian admonishes that if any woman do not observe the vow of chastity, it is better for her to be married:[3] and all the canons observe more lenity and justice toward those who assumed the vow of celibacy in youth, as is generally the case with priests and monks.

CHAPTER III.

Of Mass.

On this subject, the language of the Confession was less condemnatory than that which they soon after employed. In the

[1] 1 Tim. 4: 1. 3. [2] John 8: 44. [3] Lib. I.

Smalkald Articles,[1] which were published seven years after this Confession, in 1537, Luther declares the papal mass to be a most momentous and abominable corruption, because it militates directly and powerfully against the fundamental doctrine (justification by faith in Jesus Christ)." Speaking of these corruptions the Confessors use the following language: "Therefore we teach that it is no sacrifice for original and other sins, such sacrifice being found in the death of Christ alone according to the Scriptures. For thus it is written to the Hebrews, that Christ offered the sacrifice of himself once,[2] and thereby made satisfaction for all sin. It is an unheard of innovation to teach, that the death of Christ atoned only for original sin, and not for other sins; it is therefore to be hoped, that the chastisement of this error will not be deemed unduly severe."

"Again, the apostle Paul teaches that we obtain the divine favour *by faith, and not by works.*[3] Now this is in direct contradiction to the mass, by which work men vainly expect to obtain grace; for it is notorious that the mass is used to obtain pardon of sins and other divine blessings, not for the priests alone, but for other (absent) persons dead or alive, and for the whole world."

"Thirdly, the holy sacrament was not instituted in order that we might thereby make an offering for sin, for this has already been made; but to confirm our faith and quiet our conscience, being thus reminded that grace and the pardon of sin has been adjudged to us by the Saviour."

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[1] Art. II.

[2] Heb. 9: 26. 28. 10: 10. 14.

[3] Rom. 3: 25.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Confession.

On the subject referred to in this chapter, the views of the Confessors were given and animadverted on in Article XI of the Confession.

CHAPTER V.

Of diversity of Meats.

The doctrine was formerly inculcated that the diversity of meats and other human traditions were useful in order to merit grace and make satisfaction for sin. Hence new fasts, new ceremonies and new orders were daily invented, and strenuously insisted on as necessary parts of worship, the neglect of which was attended with heinous guilt. Thus occasion was given to many scandalous corruptions in the church.

In the first place, the grace of Christ and the doctrine concerning faith are thereby obscured. Yet these doctrines are inculcated in the gospel with great solemnity, the merits of Christ are represented as of the utmost importance, and faith in the Redeemer is placed far above all human merits. Hence the apostle Paul inveighs bitterly against the observance of the Mosaic ritual and human traditions, in order to teach us that we

acquire righteousness and grace not by our own works, but by faith in Christ. This doctrine was however entirely obscured by the notion that grace must be merited by legal observances, fasts, diversities of meats, habits, &c.

Secondly, such traditions were calculated to obscure the divine law; for these traditions are elevated far above the word of God. No one was regarded as leading a Christian life, who did not observe these holydays, and pray and fast and dress in this peculiar manner. Truly good works were regarded as mere worldly matter, such as fulfilling the duties of our calling, the labours of a father to support his family and educate them in the fear of the Lord, that mothers should take charge of their children, that the government should rule the country, &c. Such works which God has commanded, were pronounced worldly and imperfect; but these traditions had the credit of being the only holy and perfect works. For these reasons, to the making of such traditions there was no end.

Thirdly, these traditions became extremely burdensome to the consciences of men. For it was not possible to observe them all, and yet the people were taught to regard them as necessary parts of worship. *Gerson* asserts that many were thus driven to despair, and some put an end to their own existence because they heard of no consolation in the grace of Christ. How much the consciences of men were perplexed on these subjects, is evident from the writings of those divines (summistis) who undertook to compile these traditions and point out what was just and proper. So complicated an undertaking did they find it, that in the mean time the salutary doctrines of the gospel on more important subjects, such as faith and consolation in affliction, and others of like import, were totally neglected. Accordingly many pious men of those times complained that these traditions served only to excite contention and prevent devout souls from attaining the true knowledge of Christ. Gerson and several oth-

ers uttered bitter complaints on this subject. And Augustine also complains that the consciences of men ought not to be burdened with these numerous and useless traditions.

Our divines were therefore compelled by necessity and not by contempt of their spiritual superiors to correct the erroneous views which had grown out of the misapprehension of these traditions. For the gospel absolutely requires that the doctrine of faith be steadily inculcated in the churches: but this doctrine cannot be rightly understood by those who expect to merit grace by works of their own appointment. We therefore teach that the observance of these human traditions cannot merit grace, or atone for sins, or reconcile us unto God; and ought therefore not to be represented as a necessary part of Christian duty. The proofs of this position are derived from Scripture. Christ excuses[1] his apostles for not observing the traditions, saying, *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* As he calls this a vain service, it cannot be a necessary one. And, again, *Not that which goeth into the mouth, defileth a man.*[2] Again Paul says, *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink.*[3] *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink,*[4] *&c.* Peter says, *Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved.*[5] Here Peter expressly forbids that the consciences of men should be burdened with mere external ceremonies, either those of the Mosaic ritual or others. And Paul calls those prohibitions which forbid meats and to be married, "*doctrines of devils.*"[6] For it is diametrically contrary to the gospel either to institute or perform such works with a view to merit pardon

[1] Matth. 15: 3. 9.
[2] 15: 11.
[3] Rom. 14: 17.
[4] Col. 2: 16. 20.
[5] Acts 15: 10.
[6] 1 Tim. 4: 1. 3.

of sin, or under the impression that no one can be a Christian who does not observe them.

The charge, however, that we forbid the mortification of our sinful propensities, as Jovian asserts, is groundless. For our writers have always given instruction concerning the cross which it is the duty of Christians to bear. We moreover teach, that it is the duty of every one by fasting and other exercises to avoid giving any occasion to sin, but not to merit grace by such works. But this watchfulness over our body is to be observed always, not on particular days only. On this subject Christ says, *Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting.*[1] Again, *The devils are not cast out except by fasting and prayer.*[2] And Paul says, *I keep under my body and bring it into subjection,*[3] by which he wishes to intimate, that this bodily discipline is not designed to merit grace, but to keep the body in a suitable condition for the several duties of our calling. We do not therefore object to fasting itself, but to the fact that it is represented as a necessary duty, and that specific days have been fixed for its performance.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Monastic Vows.

In speaking of monasticism, it will be requisite to consider the light in which it has been viewed, the disorders which have occurred in monasteries, and the fact that many things are yet daily done in them contrary both to the word of God and the

[1] Luke 21: 34. [2] Matth. 17: 21. [3] 1 Cor. 9: 27.

papal directions. In the time of St. Augustine the monastic life was optional; subsequently when the doctrine and the discipline of monasteries were corrupted, vows were invented in order that the evil might be remedied as it were by a species of incarceration. In addition to these monastic vows, other burdens were invented by which persons were oppressed even during their minority. Many adopted this mode of life through ignorance, who, though of riper years, were fully acquainted with their infirmity. All these in whatever way they may have been enticed or coerced into these vows, are compelled to remain, although even the papal regulations would liberate many of them. This severity has frequently been censured by many pious persons in former times; for they well knew that both boys and girls were often thrust into these monasteries merely for the purpose of being supported. They saw also the deplorable consequences of this course, and many have complained that the canons have been so grossly violated. Monastic vows were also represented in a very improper light. They were represented as equal to baptism, and as a method of deserving pardon and justification before God, yea as being not only a meritorious righteousness, but also the fulfilment of the commands and counsels of the gospel. They also taught that the monastic life was more meritorious than all the professions which God appointed, such as that of minister, civil officers, &c. as their own books will prove and they cannot deny. In short, he that has been enticed into a monastery, will learn but little of Christ. Formerly schools were kept in monasteries, in which the Scriptures and other things were taught, so that ministers and bishops could be selected from them. Now they pretend, that the monastic life is so meritorious in the sight of God, as to be a state of perfection far superior to those modes of life which God himself has commanded.

In opposition to all this we teach, that all who do not feel inclined to a life of celibacy, have the power and right to mar-

ry. Their vows to the contrary cannot annul the command of God,[1] Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. To this course we are urged and compelled, both by the divine precepts, and the general nature of man, agreeably to the declaration of God himself, It is not good for man to be alone, I will make him an help meet for him.[2]

Although the divine precept concerning marriage, already absolves many from their monastic vows, our writers assign many other reasons to demonstrate that they are not binding. Every species of worship invented by men, without a divine precept, in order to merit justification and grace, is contrary to the gospel and will of God. As Christ himself says, But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.[3] Coincident with this is the doctrine of Paul, that we should not seek our righteousness in our own services, invented by men; that true righteousness in the sight of God, must be sought in faith, and in our confidence in the mercy of God through Christ, his only Son. But it is notorious, that the monks represent their fictitious righteousness as amply sufficient to merit the pardon of sin and divine grace. But what is this else than to rob the merits of Christ of their glory, and to deny the righteousness of faith? Hence it follows that these vows were unjust and a false worship, and of course not binding. For a vow to do any thing contrary to the divine command, that is, an *oath improper in itself, is not obligatory, as even the canons declare; for an oath cannot bind us to sin.*

St Paul says to the Galatians,[4] Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. Those therefore who would be justified by their vows, have abandoned the grace of God through Christ; for

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[1] 1 Cor. 7: 2.

[2] Gen. 2: 18.

[3] Matth. 15: 9.

[4] Gal. 5: 4.

they rob Christ of his glory, who alone can justify us, and transfer this glory to their vows and monastic life. —— It is moreover a corruption of the divine law and of true worship, to hold up the monastic life to the people as the only perfect one. For Christian perfection consists in this, that we love and fear God with all our heart, and yet combine with it sincere reliance and faith in him through Christ: that it is our privilege and duty to supplicate the throne of grace for such things as we need in all our trials, and in our respective callings; and to give diligence in the performance of good works. It is in this that true perfection consists, and the true worship of God, but not in begging, or in a black or a white cap. This extravagant praise of celibacy, is calculated to disseminate among the people, erroneous views on the sanctity of the married life. —— Examples are on record, of persons who abandoned their wives and children and business, and shut themselves up in a monastery, under the vain impression that thus they came out from the world, and led a holier life. They forgot that we ought to serve God according to his own directions, and not the inventions of men.[1]

[1] For a view of the abominable and outrageous licentiousness of these places, see The master key to Popery by Antonio Gavin, and Cramp's Textbook of Popery, p. 326, &c. The life of Ricci, by De Potter, 3 vols. 2d ed. Brussels, 1826. The disclosures contained in these volumes are of the most disgusting and horrifying description. The prioress of the convent of St. Catharine of Pistoie, says "With the exception of three or four religious persons, all the monks now dead or alive, whom I have ever known, were of the same character. They all made the some professions and adopted the same conduct. They live with the nuns on more familiar terms than married people. Vol. I. p. 316. For endeavouring to put a stop to these disorders, Ricci was stigmatized by Pope Pius the VI. as "a fanatic, a liar, a calumniator, seditious, and a usurper of other men's rights." Vol. I. p. 423. He died Jan 27, 1810. See also the Canadian Nun recently published in New York.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Power of the bishops or clergy.

We extract from this extended article, so much as relates to the usurpations of civil and political power by the Roman pontifs and ecclesiastics.

Much has been written on this subject in former times, and an unnatural commixture of civil and ecclesiastical power has been effected. Extensive wars and rebellions have thus been produced by the pontiffs, who under pretence of authority from Christ, have not only invented new methods of worship, and thus under penalty of excommunication oppressed the consciences of men; but even presumed to dethrone kings and emperors at pleasure, and to place others in their stead! This presumption has in former times often been censured by learned and pious men. Hence we have been compelled to point out the lines of distinction between civil and ecclesiastical power; and have inculcated the duty of paying due respect to each, as among the most important appointments of God. Accordingly we teach that the power of the keys or the office of the ministry, according to the gospel, consists in a divine command and commission to preach the gospel, to remit and retain sins, (that is, to announce the conditions on which God will pardon penitent sinners,) and to administer the sacraments. For Christ sent forth his disciples with the command, "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you—Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained."[1] But this power of the keys or clergy relates entirely to the doctrine and preach-

[1] John 20: 21.

ing of God's word and the administration of the sacraments to the people of their charge. —— Inasmuch then as the power of the church or of the clergy confers only spiritual gifts, and is exerted through the preaching of the gospel, it cannot interfere with the civil government. For the latter relates to matters entirely different, and protects not the souls of men, but their bodies, against external violence, by the sword and bodily penalties.

The civil and ecclesiastical governments ought therefore not to be united. The church is commanded to preach the gospel, and administer the sacraments; and ought therefore not to interfere with the powers of the civil government, by dethroning, or making kings, by absolving subjects from allegiance to the civil government, nor enact laws on subjects belonging to civil legislation. Christ himself has taught us, My kingdom is not of this world;[1] and Who hath made me a judge over you?[2] And Paul to the Philippians,[3] says, Our citizenship (thus has Luther correctly rendered *πολιτευμα*, *bürgerschaft*) is in heaven. And again, The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.[4]

This, according to our view, is the difference between the civil and ecclesiastical power.—If ministers have any civil office at all, they derive it from their political government, and it has nothing to do with their office as ministers of the gospel. —— It is the duty of the church to give heed to the bishops, according to the declaration of Christ, He that heareth you, heareth me.[5] But if they teach or appoint any thing contrary to the gospel, we are commanded by God himself not to obey them: "Beware of false prophets."[6] And Paul says, "But

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[1] John 18: 36. [2] Luke 12: 14. [3] Phil. 3: 20.
[4] 2 Cor. 10: 4. 5. [5] Luke 10: 16. [6] Matth. 7: 15.

though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.[1] And to the Corinthians[2] he says, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." —— And St. Augustine says, Nor is it our duty to obey those bishops who have been duly elected, if they err, or teach or command any thing contrary to the word of God.—The power of the clergy to solemnize marriage, they derive from the civil government.

Conclusion.

The foregoing are the principal subjects of dispute between us. It were indeed easy to enumerate many other abuses and errors, but for the sake of brevity we have omitted them. Much complaint, for example, has existed concerning indulgences, pilgrimages, and the abuse of excommunication. The clergy have also had endless disputes with the monks about confession and numberless other subjects. These things we have omitted in order that those of more importance may be the more carefully weighed.

Signed, JOHN, the Elector of Saxony.
GEORGE, Earl of Brandenburg.
ERNEST, Duke of Luneburg.
PHILIP, Landgrave of Hesse.
JOHN FREDERICK, Duke of Saxony.
FRANCIS, Duke of Luneberg.
WOLFGANG, Prince of Anhalt.
THE SENATE AND MAGISTRACY of Nuremberg.
THE SENATE of Reutlingen.

[1] Gal. 1: 8. [2] 2 Cor. 13: 8.

The Romish Church since the Reformation.

The theory, to which Romanists refer, as well for authority as for vindication of the flagrant usurpations of civil power by the popes, is ingeniously set forth by one of their ablest and most authentic writers, Cardinal Bellarmine, in a series of Lectures on the Papal power, delivered in Rome itself, by appointment of Pope Gregory, fourteen years after the council of Trent. "It is asserted,[1] that the Pope has not *directly, and immediately*, any temporal power; but that, by reason of his spiritual power, he may possess, *at least indirectly, supreme power in directing the temporal affairs of all Christians, in order to the bestowment of spiritual good.*" This assertion is illustrated by the following analogy:—as man is compounded of flesh and spirit, which though separate, are closely connected; and the latter rules the former, so that if the end proposed by the spirit is hindered by the flesh, the flesh must be punished by fasts and other methods, and if necessary the tongue be prevented from speaking, the eyes from seeing &c. In like manner, society is subject to political and to spiritual power, the end of the one being temporal peace, of the other eternal salvation. They constitute one body, and the inferior must be subject and subordinate to the superior. The spiritual power does not intermeddle with temporal matters, *if the spiritual design be not hindered. But if any thing of that kind take place, the* SPIRITUAL POWER MAY AND OUGHT TO COERCE THE TEMPORAL POWER, *in every suitable and necessary manner.* "The Pope cannot," says Bellarmine, "as Pope, *ordinarily* depose temporal princes, although just reason exists, in the same man-

[1] See Cramp's Text book of Popery, p. 311.

ner in which he deposes bishops, that is, as an ordinary judge; *yet he may change kingdoms, and take away from one, and bestow upon another, as supreme spiritual prince, if the same should be necessary to the salvation of souls.*" Again, "the Pope cannot as Pope, *ordinarily* enact or confirm civil laws, or annul the laws of princes, because he is not political head of the church; yet he may do all this, *if any civil law is necessary to the salvation of souls, and kings will not enact it, or if any civil law is injurious to the salvation of souls, and kings will not abrogate it.*" Further, "the Pope cannot as Pope, *ordinarily* judge in temporal matters; nevertheless in any case in which the *safety of souls is concerned*, the Pope may assume even temporal judgment; when for instance, there is no judge, as when two independent monarchs are at variance, or when those who may and ought to judge refuse to give sentence." Once more.—"The Pope may and ought to compel all Christians to serve God in that manner which their station requires of them. *But kings are bound to serve God by defending the church and punishing heretics and schismatics. Therefore the* POPE MAY AND OUGHT TO ENJOIN *kings to do this, and if they neglect,* TO COMPEL THEM BY EXCOMMUNICATION AND OTHER SUITABLE MEASURES."[1]

We need not inform the reader that the above ingenious but sophistical theory, presents to the holy father full license to interfere with the liberties of any and every country whenever he pleases and finds it expedient. That the Romish church has renounced none of her pretensions, might be inferred from her general policy in past ages. Retraction and Reform are words unknown in her vocabulary, and hostile to her theory of papal infallibility. But it is demonstrated by the fact that *during the last year (1832) the Pope actually undertook to pronounce null and void the laws of the Portuguese government at*

[1] See Bellarmine de Roman. Pontif. lib. 1. cap. 1—16. &c.

Lisbon, and absolved the inhabitants of that country from obligation to obey them!!![1] A lucid commentary this, on the reiterated declarations of the Papal leaders in this country, that the Pope has nothing to do with civil governments!!

That the Pope has for some time past been casting a wishful eye upon these happy shores, we cannot doubt, when we reflect that immense sums of money have recently been sent into this country for the extension of Papacy among us! A single Society in Austria, which enjoys the express sanction of the present Pope, remitted 160,000 florins to the Romish bishops in Kentucky and Ohio, within the last three years. How deep the interest of the holy father in this society is, and how reasonably we may calculate on its rapid extension, may be inferred from the fact, that the Pope promised to all contributing members of this association gratuitous remission of sins several times a year! The great numbers of Jesuits who are flocking into our country and commencing operations in every part of it, add not a little to the plausibility of this opinion. Whether the extensive immigration of catholics from different parts of Europe, is encouraged by their priests at home, and with what motive, is of course not known among us. But the prominent advocates of Romanism in this country unhesitatingly repeat the declaration, that their church cannot alter, but maintains the same principles heretofore avowed. We may therefore reasonably expect a persevering and desperate effort to gain the ascendency among us in due season; whilst at the same time we cannot doubt, that by due vigilance in the citizens of our happy country, those efforts, by the blessing of God, will meet a signal defeat.

[1] Protestant Magazine, New-York, Vol. I. p. 117—121.

APPENDIX NO. I.

Confessio Augustana.

1. *De Deo.*

Ecclesiae magno consensu apud nos docent, Decretum Nicenae Synodi, de unitate essentiae divinae, et de tribus personis, verum et sine ulla dubitatione credendum esse. Videlicet, quòd sit una essentia divina, quae et appellatur et est Deus, aeternus, incorporeus, impartibilis, immensa potentia, sapientia, bonitate, creator et conservator omnium rerum visibilium et invisibilium, et tamen tres sint personae, ejusdem essentiae et potentiae, et coaeternae, Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus. Et nomine personae utuntur ea significatione, qua usi sunt in hac causa Scriptores Ecclesiastici, ut significet non partem aut qualitatem in alio, sed quod propriè subsistit.

Damnat omnes haereses, contra hunc articulum exortas, ut Manichaeos, qui duo principia ponebant Bonum et Malum. Item Valentinianos, Arianos, Eunomianos, Mahometistas, et omnes horum similes. Damnant et Samosatenos, veteres et neotericos, qui, cùm tantùm unam personam esse contendant, de Verbo et de Spiritu sancto astutè et impiè rhetoricantur, quòd non sint personae distinctae, sed quod Verbum significet verbum vocale et spiritus motum in rebus creatum.

II. *De Peccato Orginis.*

Item docent, quòd, post lapsum Adae, omnes homines secundum naturam propagati nascantur, cum peccato, hoc est, sine metu Dei, sine fiducia, erga Deum, et cum concupiscentia, quodque hic morbus, seu vitium originis verè sit peccatum, damnans et afferens nunc quoque aeternam mortem his, qui non renascuntur per Baptismum et Spiritum Sanctum.

Damnant Pelagianos, et alios, qui vitium originis negant esse peccatum, et ut extenuent gloriam meriti et beneficiorum Christi, disputant hominem propriis viribus rationis coram Deo justificari posse.

III. *De Filio Dei.*

Item docent, quòd Verbum, hoc est, Filius Dei assumserit humanam naturâ in utero beatae Mariae virginis, ut sint duae naturae, divina et humana, in unitate personae inseparabiliter conjunctae, unus Christus, vere Deus, et verè homo, natus ex virgine Mariâ, vere passus, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus, ut reconciliaret nobis Patrem, et hostia esset non tantùm pro culpa originis, sed etiam pro omnibus actualibus hominum peccatis. Idem descendit ad inferos, et verè resurrexit tertia die, deinde ascendit ad coelos, ut sedeat ad dexteram Patris, et perpetuò regnet et dominetur omnibus creaturis, sanctificet credentes in ipsum, misso in corda eorum Spiritu Sancto, qui regat, consoletur ac vivificet eos, ac defendat adversus diabolum, et vim peccati. Idem Christus palam est rediturus, ut judicet vivos et mortuos, etc. juxta Symbolum Apostolorum.

IV. *De Justificatione.*

Item docent, quòd homines non possint justificari coram Deo propriis viribus, meritis aut operibus, sed gratis justificentur propter Christum per fidem, cùm credunt se in gratiam recipi, et pec-

cata remitti propter Christum, qui sua morte pro nostris peccatis satisfecit. Hanc fidem imputat Deus pro justitia coram ipso, Rom. 3. et 4.

V. *De Ministerio Eccles.*

Ut hanc fidem consequamur, institutum est ministerium docendi Evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta. Nam per verbum et Sacramenta, tanquam per instrumenta donatur Spiritus Sanctus, qui fidem efficit, ubi et quando visum est Deo, in iis, qui audiunt Evangelium, scilicet, quòd Deus non propter nostra merita, sed propter Christum justificet hos, qui credunt, se propter Christum in gratiam recipi.

Damnant Anabaptistas, et alios, qui sentiunt Spiritum Sanctum contingere sine verbo externo hominibus per ipsorum præparationes et opera.

VI. *De Nova Obedientia.*

Item docent, quod fides illa debeat bonos fructus parere, et quòd oporteat bona opera, mandata à Deo, facere, propter voluntatem Dei, non ut confidamus per ea opera justificationem coram Deo mereri. Nam remissio peccatorum et justificatio fide apprehenditur, sicut testatur et vox Christi. Cùm feceritis hæc omnia, dicite, servi inutiles sumus. Idem docent et veteres Scriptores Ecclesiastici ; Ambrosius enim inquit : Hoc constitutum est à Deo, ut qui credit in Christum, salvus sit, sine opere, solâ fide, gratis accipiens remissionem peccatorum.

VII. *De Ecclesia.*

Item docent, quòd una sancta Ecclesia perpetuò mansura sit : Est autem Eecclesia congregatio sanctorum, in qua Evangelium rectè docetur, et rectè administrantur Sacramenta. Et ad veram unitatem Ecclesiæ, satis est consentire de doctrinâ Evangelii et

administratione Sacramentorum. Nec necesse est ubique esse similes traditiones humanas, seu ritus aut ceremonias, ab hominibus institutas. Sicut inquit Paulus : Una fides, unum baptisma, unus Deus et pater omnium, &c.

VIII. *Quid sit Ecclesia.*

Quanquam Ecclesia propriè sit congregatio sanctorum, et verè credentium ; tamen, cùm in hac vita multi hypocritæ et mali admixti sint, licet uti Sacramentis, quæ per malos administrantur, juxta vocem Christi. Sedent Scribæ et Pharisæi in cathedra Moysis, &c. Et sacramenta et verbum propter ordinationem et mandatum Christi sunt efficacia, etiamsi per malos exhibeantur.

Damnant Donatistas et similes, qui negabant licere uti ministerio malorum in Ecclesia, et sentiebant, ministerium malorum inutile et in efficax esse.

IX. *De Baptismo.*

De Baptismo docent, quòd sit necessarius ad salutem, quodque per Baptismum offeratur gratia Dei ; Et quòd pueri sint baptizandi, qui per baptismum oblati Deo, recipiantur in gratiam Dei.

Damnant Anabaptistas, qui improbant Baptismum puerorum et affirmant pueros sine Baptismo salvos fieri.

X. *De Coena Domini.*

De coena Domini docent, quòd corpus et sanguis Christi verè adsint, et distribuantur vescentibus in Coenâ Domini et improbant secus docentes.

XI. *De Confessione.*

De Confessione docent quòd absolutio privata in Ecclesiis retinenda sit, quanquam in confessione non sit necesaria omnium

delictorum enumeratio. Est enim impossibilis juxta Psalmum 19: 12. Delicta quis intelligit?

XII. *De Poenitentia.*

De poenitentia docent, quòd lapsis post Baptismum contingere possit remissio peccatorum quocunque tempore, cùm convertuntur. Et quòd Ecclesia talibus redeuntibus ad poenitentiam absolutionem impertiri debeat.

Constat autem poenitentia propriè his duabus partibus: Altera est, contritio seu terrores incussi conscientiae agnito peccato. Altera est, fides, quae concipitur ex Evangelio, seu absolutione, et credit propter Christum remitti peccata, et consolatur conscientiam, et ex terroribus liberat. Deinde sequi debent bona opera, quae sunt fructus poenitentiae.

Damnant Anabaptistas, qui negant semel justificatos posse amittere Spiritum Sanctum. Item, qui contendunt, quibusdam tantam perfectionem in hac vita contingere, ut peccare non possint. Damnantur et Novatiani, qui nolebant absolvere lapsos post Baptismum redeuntes ad pœnitentiam. Rejiciuntur et isti, qui non docent remissionem peccatorum per fidem contingere, sed jubent nos mereri gratiam per satisfactiones nostras.

XIII. *De Usu Sacramentorum.*

De usu Sacramentorum docent, quòd Sacramenta instituta sint, non modò ut sint notæ professionis inter homines, sed magis, ut sint signa et testimonia voluntatis Dei erga nos, ad excitandam et confirmandam fidem in his, qui utuntur, proposita. Itaque utendum est Sacramentis, ita ut fides accedat, quæ credat promissionibus, quæ per Sacramenta exhibentur et ostenduntur.

Damnant igitur illos, qui docent, quòd Sacramenta ex opere operato justificent, nec docent, fidem requiri in usu Sacramentorum, quæ credat remitti peccata.

XIV. *De Ordine Ecclesiastico.*

De ordine Ecclesiastico docent, quòd nemo debeat in Ecclesia publicè docere, aut Sacramenta administrare, nisi ritè vocatus.

XV. *De Ritibus Ecclesiasticis.*

De ritibus Ecclesiasticis docent, quòd ritus illi servandi sint, qui sine peccato servari possunt, et prosunt ad tranquillitatem et bonum ordinem in Ecclesia, sicut certae feriae, festa et simila.

De talibus rebus tamen admonentur homines, ne conscientiae onerentur, tanquam talis cultus ad salutem necessarius sit.

Admonentur etiam, quod traditiones humanae institutae ad placandum Deum, ad promerendam gratiam, et satisfaciendum pro peccatis, adversentur Evangelio et doctrinae fidei. Quare vota et traditiones de cibis et diebus, etc. institutae ad promerendam gratiam, et satisfaciendum pro peccatis, inutiles sint et contra Evangelium.

XVI. *De Rebus Civilibus.*

De rebus civilibus docent, quòd legitimae ordinationes civiles sint bona opera Dei, quòd Christianis liceat gerere Magistratus, exercere judicia, judicare res ex Imperatoriis et aliis praesentibus legibus, supplicia jure constituere, jure bellare, militare, lege contrahere, tenere proprium, jusjurandum postulantibus Magistratibus dare, ducere uxorem, nubere.

Damnant Anabaptistas, qui interdicunt haec civilia officia Christianis. Damnant et illos, qui Evangelicam perfectionem non collocant in timore Dei et fide, sed in deserendis civilibus officiis, quia Evangelium tradit justitiam aeternam cordis. Interim non dissipat Politiam aut Oeconomiam, sed maximè postulat conservare tanquam ordinationes Dei, et in talibus or-

dinationibus exercere caritatem. Itaque necessariò debent Christiani obedire Magistratibus suis et legibus. Nisi cùm jubent peccare, tunc enim magis debent obedire Deo, quàm hominibus, Actor. 5. v. 19.

XVII. *De Christi reditu ad Judicium.*

Item docent, quòd Christus apparebit in consummatione mundi ad judicandum, et mortuos omnes resuscitabit, piis et electis dabit vitam aeternam et perpetua gaudia, impios autem homines ac diabolos condemnabit, ut sine fine crucientur.

Damnant Anabaptistas, qui sentiunt, hominibus damnatis ac diabolis finem poenarum futurum esse. Damnant et alios, qui nunc spargunt Judaicas opiniones, quòd ante resurrectionem mortuorum, pii regnum mundi occupaturi sint, ubique oppressis impiis.

XVIII. *De Libero Arbitrio.*

De libero arbitrio docent, quòd humana voluntas habeat aliquam libertatem ad efficiendam civilem justitiam, et deligendas res rationi subjectas. Sed non habet vim sine Spiritu Sancto efficiendae justitiae Dei, seu justitiae spiritualis, quia animalis homo non percipit ea, quae sunt Spiritus Dei; sed haec fit in cordibus, cùm per verbum Spiritus Sanctus concipitur. Haec totidem verbis dicit Augustinus lib. 3. Hypognosticon. Esse fatemur liberum arbitrium omnibus hominibus, habens quidem judicium rationis, non per quod sit idoneum in iis, quae ad Deum pertinent, sine Deo aut inchoare aut certè peragere, sed tantum in operibus vitae praesentis tam bonis, qùam etiam malis; Bonis dico, quae de bono naturae oriuntur, i. e. velle laborare in agro, velle manducare et bibere, velle habere amicum, velle habere indumenta, velle fabricare domum, uxorem velle ducere, pecora nutrire, artem discere diversarum rerum bonarum, velle quicquid bonum ad praesentem pertinet vitam. Quae omnia non

sine divino gubernaculo subsistunt, imò ex ipso et per ipsum sunt, et esse coeperunt. Malis verò dico, ut est: velle idolum colere, velle homicidium, etc.

Damnant Pelagianos, et alios, qui docent, quòd sine Spiritu Sancto, solis naturae viribus, possimus Deum super omnia diligere, item praecepta Dei facere, quoad substantiam actuum. Quanquam enim externa opera aliquo modo efficere natura possit: potest enim continere manus a furto, a caede; tamen interiores motus non potest efficere, ut timorem Dei, fiduciam erga Deum, castitatem, patientiam, etc.

XIX. *De causa peccati.*

De causa peccati docent, quòd tametsi Deus creat et conservat naturam, tamen causa peccati est voluntas malorum, videlicit, diaboli et impiorum, quae non adjuvante Deo avertit se à Deo, sicut Christus ait, Joh. 8. Cùm loquitur mendacium, ex seipso loquitur.

XX. *De Bonis Operibus.*

Falsò accusantur nostri, quòd bona opera prohibeant. Nam scripta eorum, quae extant de decem praeceptis, et alia simili argumento, testantur, quòd utiliter docuerint de omnibus vitae generibus et officiis, quae genera vitae, quae opera in qualibet vocatione Deo placeant. De quibus rebus olim parum docebant Concionatores, tantùm puerilia et non necessaria opera urgebant, ut certas ferias, certa jejunia, fraternitates, peregrinationes, cultus sanctorum, rosaria, monachatum et similia. Haec adversarii nostri admoniti non dediscunt, nec perinde praedicant haec inutilia opera, ut olim. Praeterea incipiunt fidei mentionem facere, de qua olim mirum erat silentium. Docent, nos non tantùm operibus justificari, sed conjungunt fidem et opera, et dicunt, nos fide et operibus justificari. Quae doctrina tolerabilior est priore, et plus afferre potest consolationis, quàm vetus ipsorum doctrina.

Cùm igitur doctrina de fide, quam oportet in ecclesia praecipuam esse, tam diu jacuerit ignota, quemadmodum fateri omnes necesse est, de fidei justitia altissimum silentium fuisse in concionibus, tantùm doctrinam operum versatam esse in Ecclesiis, nostri de fide sic admonuerunt Ecclesias.

Principio, quod opera nostra non possint reconciliare DEUM, aut mereri remissionem peccatorum, et gratiam et justificationem, sed hanc tantùm fide consequimur, credentes quòd propter Christum recipiamur in gratiam, qui solus positus est mediator et propitiatorium, per quem reconcilietur pater. Itaque qui confidit, operibus se mereri gratiam, is aspernatur Christi meritum et gratiam, et quaerit sine Christo humanis viribus viam ad DEUM, cum Christus de se dixerit: Ego sum via, veritas et vita.

Haec doctrina de fide ubique in Paulo tractatur, Eph. 2. Gratia salvi facti estis per fidem, et hoc non ex vobis. Dei donum est, non ex operibus, etc.

Et ne quis cavilletur, à nobis novam Pauli interpretationem excogitari, tota haec causa habet testimonia Patrum. Nam Augustinus multis voluminibus defendit gratiam et justitiam fidei contra merita operum. Et similia docet Ambrosius de vocatione Gentium, et alibi. Sic enim inquit de vocatione gentium: Vilesceret redemtio sanguinis Christi, nec misericordiae DEI humanorum operum praerogativa succumberet, si justificatio quæ fit per gratiam, meritis praecedentibus deberetur, ut non munus largientis, sed merces esset operantis.

Quanquam autem haec doctrina contemnitur ab imperitis, tamen experiuntur piae ac pavidae conscientiae, plurimum eam consolationis afferre, quia conscientiae non possunt reddi tranquillae per ulla opera, sed tantùm fide, cùm certo statuunt, quòd propter Christum habeant placatum DEUM. Quemadmodum Paulus docet Rom. 5. Justificati per fidem, pacem habemus apud DEUM. Tota haec doctrina ad illud certamen perterrefactae conscientiae referenda est, nec sine illo certamine intelli-

gi potest. Quare malè judicant de ea re homines imperiti et prophani, qui Christianam justitiam nihil esse somniant, nisi civilem et philosophicam justitiam.

Olim vexabantur conscientiae doctrina operum, non audiebant ex Evangelio consolationem. Quosdam conscientia expulit in desertum, in monasteria, sperantes ibi se gratiam merituros esse per vitam monasticam. Alii alia excogitaverunt opera, ad promerendam gratiam et satisfaciendum pro peccatis. Ideo magnoperè fuit opus, hanc doctrinam de fide in Christum tradere, et renovare, ne deesset consolatio pavidis conscientiis, sed scirent, fide in Christum apprehendi gratiam et remissionem peccatorum et justificationem.

Admonentur etiam homines, quòd hic nomen fidei non significet tantùm historiae notitiam, qualis est in impiis et diabolo, sed significet fidem, quae credit non tantum historiam, sed etiam effectum historiae, videlicet hunc articulum, Remissionem peccatorum, quòd videlicet per Christum habeamus gratiam, justitiam et remissionem peccatorum.

Jam qui scit, se per Christum habere propitium Patrem, is verè novit Deum, scit se ei curae esse, invocat eum; Denique non est sine Deo sicut gentes. Nam diaboli et impii non possunt hunc articulum credere, Remissionem peccatorum. Ideo Deum tanquam hostem oderunt, non invocant eum, nihil boni ab eo expectant. Augustinus etiam de fidei nomine hoc modo admonet lectorem et docet, in scripturis nomen fidei accipi, non pro notitia, qualis est in impiis, sed pro fiducia, quae consolatur et erigit perterrefactas mentes.

Praeterea docent nostri, quòd necesse sit bona opera facere, non ut confidamus per ea gratiam mereri, sed propter voluntatem Dei. Tantùm fide apprehenditur remissio peccatorum ac gratia. Et quia per fidem accipitur Spiritus Sanctus, jam corda renovantur, et induunt novos affectus, ut parere bona opera possint. Sic enim ait Ambrosius: Fides bonae voluntatis, et justae actionis genetrix est. Nam humanae vires, sine Spiritu Sancto,

plenae sunt impiis affectibus, et sunt imbecilliores, quàm ut bona opera possint efficere coram Deo. Adhaec, sunt in potestate diaboli, qui impellit homines ad varia peccata, ad impias opiniones, ad manifesta scelera. Quemadmodum est videre in philosophis, qui et ipsi conati honestè vivere, tamen id non potuerunt efficere, sed contaminati sunt multis manifestis sceleribus. Talis est imbecilitas hominis, cùm est sine fide et sine Spiritu Sancto, et tantum humanis viribus se gubernat.

Hinc facilè apparet, hanc doctrinam non esse accusandam, quòd bona opera prohibeat, sed multò magis laudandam, quòd ostendit, quomodo bona opera facere possimus. Nam sine fide nullo modo potest humana natura primi aut secundi praecepti opera facere. Sine fide non invocat Deum, à Deo nihil expectat, non tolerat crucem, sed quaerit humana praesidia, confidit humanis praesidiis. Ita regnant in corde omnes cupiditates, et humana consilia, cùm abest fides et fiducia erga Deum. Quare et Christus dixit : Sine me nihil potestis facere, Joh. 15. Et Ecclesia canit : Sine tuo numine, nihil est in homine, nihil est innoxium.

XXI. *De cultu Sanctorum.*

De cultu sanctorum docent, quòd memoria sanctorum proponi potest, ut imitemur fidem eorum, et bona opera juxta vocationem ; Ut Cæsar imitari potest exemplum Davidis in bello gerendo ad depellendos Turcas à patria. Nam uterque rex est. Sed scriptura non docet invocare sanctos, seu petere auxilium à sanctis. Quia unum Christum nobis proponit mediatorem, propitiatorium, Pontificem et intercessorem. Hic invocandus est, et promisit, se exauditurum esse preces nostras, et hunc cultum maximè probat, videlicet ut invocetur in omnibus afflictionibus. 1 Joh. 2. Si quis peccat, habemus advocatum apud Deum, etc.

Haec ferè summa est doctrinae apud nos, in quâ cerni potest,

nihil inesse, quod discrepat à scripturis, vel ab Ecclesia Catholica, vel ab Ecclesia Romana quatenus ex scriptoribus nota est. Quòd cùm ita sit, inclementer judicant isti, qui nostros pro haereticis haberi postulant. Sed dissensio est de quibusdam abusibus, qui sine certa auctoritate in Ecclesias irrepserunt, in quibus etiam, si qua esset dissimilitudo, tamen decebat haec lenitas Episcopos, ut propter confessionem, quam modò recensuimus, tolerarent nostros, quia ne Canones quidem tàm duri sunt, ut eosdem ritus ubique esse postulent, neque similes unquam omnium Ecclesiarum ritus fuerunt. Quanquam apud nos magna ex parte veteres ritus diligenter servantur. Falsa enim calumnia est, quòd omnes ceremoniae, omnia vetera instituta in Ecclesiis nostris aboleantur. Verùm publica querela fuit, abusus quosdam in vulgaribus ritibus haerere. Hi quia non poterant bona conscientia probari, aliqua ex parte correcti sunt.

APPENDIX NO. II.

FORMULA

FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH.

[Published by the General Synod of said Church.]

CHAPTER I.

Preliminary Principles.

SEC. 1. We believe that from an examination of the works of nature and the course of events, we may derive evidence of the existence of God and the prominent truths of natural religion.[1]

SEC. 2. But that the evidence of natural religion is not such as to afford us a satisfactory knowledge of the nature of God and our relation to him; nor its influence sufficient to urge us to duty;[2] and that therefore a further revelation from God is desirable.

SEC. 3. We believe that such a revelation God has given, at sundry times and in divers manners, unto the fathers, and in later days by his *Divine Son* Jesus Christ, and his inspired servants,[3] and that this revelation is contained in the books known in protestant christendom, as the Old[4] and New Testament; that every individual is bound to receive this as his infallible rule of faith and practice, and to be governed by it.[5]

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[1] Rom. 1: 20. [2] Acts 4: 12. Rom. 3: 1. 2. [3] Heb. 1: 1. 2.
[4] 2 Tim. 3: 16. [5] John 5: 39. Acts 17: 11. John 14: 16. 17.

Sec. 4. We hold that liberty of conscience and the free exercise of private judgment in matters of religion, are natural and unalienable rights of men, of which no government, civil or ecclesiastical can deprive us.[1]

Sec. 5. As order is necessary to the prosperity of every associate body, and as Jesus Christ has left no entire, specific form of Government and Discipline for his church; it is the duty of every individual Church to adopt such regulations as appear to them most consistent with the spirit and precepts of the New Testament, and best calculated to subserve the interests of the church of Christ.

Sec. 6. And as men exercising the right of private judgment, agree in the opinion, that Christianity requires a social connexion among its professors, and as experience proves that men will differ in some of their views of doctrine and discipline; and as too much difference of opinion would be prejudicial to the objects of the association; therefore reason dictates that those of similar views should associate together, that it is their duty to require for admission to church-membership among them, or for induction into the sacred office, and for continuance in either, such terms as they deem most accordant with the precepts and spirit of the Bible.

Sec. 7. Upon the broad basis of these principles, was the Evangelical Lutheran Church founded immediately after the Reformation. Adhering to the same principles, the Church in America is governed by *three Judicatories:* the *Council* of each individual Church, the *District Synods*, consisting of all the clergy and an equal number of laymen from a particular district of country, and one General Synod formed by representatives from all the different Synods of the Lutheran Church. The ratio of clerical and lay-representatives is determined in the Constitution of the General Synod; and the *powers* of this body are only those of an *Advisory Council.*

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[1] Rom. 2: 13. 15. and others. Dan. 6: 1. 23. Acts 4: 19.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Church.

PART I. OF THE INVISIBLE CHURCH.

SEC. 1. The true or invisible Church of Christ is the collective body of all[1] those of every religious denomination in the world, who are in a state of grace.[2]

SEC. 2. The true Church of Christ is a spiritual[3] society, consisting of members whose qualifications[4] are spiritual, and who are associated for spiritual purposes.[5]

SEC. 3. It is a catholic or universal[6] society: its members not being confined to any particular nation or religious denomination.

PART II. OF THE EXTERNAL OR VISIBLE CHURCH.

SEC. 1. The visible church is the collective body of those who profess the Christian religion; consisting of all those who have been admitted to membership by baptism,[7] and have not been deprived of it by excommunication.

SEC. 2. Of this society our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the true and only head;[8] having neither abandoned his church nor appointed any vicar in his stead.

SEC. 3. As the spirit of Christianity leads its possessors to social intercourse[9] with each other; and as such a connexion is essential to the accomplishment of the object of the Christian church; and as such a relation can subsist only among persons of contiguous residence; therefore Christians living near together have from the time of the Apostles[10] formed themselves into societies for the

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1 Eph. 4: 1. 7. 2 Matth. 7: 21. 12: 50. Acts 10: 35.
3 John 18: 36. 4 1 John 4: 13.
5 Eph. 4: 12. 1 Thess. 5: 11.
6 1 Cor. 1: 2. John 10: 16. Rom. 12: 4. Eph. 4: 4. 6.
7 Matth. 28: 19. 8 Eph. 5: 23. 24. 1: 22.
9 John 13: 34. 35. Eph. 4: 3. 5: 19.
10 Acts 2: 41. 1 Thess. 2: 14. Gal. 1: 22.

better attainment of the objects of the Christian institution. And every society participates in the duties of the whole church.

Sec. 4. It is the duty of every such society and of the visible church at large, to have the word and sacraments administered in their purity,[1] to give an adequate and just support to the pastor or pastors who minister unto them, to provide for the perpetuation of an able and faithful ministry,[2] and to endeavour to propagate the gospel to the ends of the earth.[3]

Sec. 5. It is the duty of the church to watch over the purity and faithfulness of her members.[4]

Sec. 6. The jurisdiction of the church is purely spiritual; it ought to have no connexion with the civil government,[5] neither ought its decisions be enforced by the arm of civil power.

Sec. 7. The power of the church is purely *declarative*, whether exercised by an individual church council, or by any other ecclesiastical judicatory, i. e. the *Bible* is their juridical code, and their decisions are valid only because founded on scripture.

Sec. 8. The visible church is not an association to which we may belong or not at our option; but it is the duty of every one who has an opportunity to be a faithful member of it.[6]

CHAPTER III.

Of the Officers of the Church.

OF PASTORS.

Sec. 1. Our Lord and Saviour himself instituted the clerical office in the New Testament church, and made it of perpetual standing.[7] The persons filling this office, are in scripture designated

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1 1 Tim. 4: 6. 6: 3. 5. Gal. 1: 8. 9.
2 Tit. 1: 5. 2 Tim. 2.
3 Matth. 28: 19. 20.
4 1 Cor. 5: 7. 13.
5 John 18: 36.
6 Matth. 28: 19. 11: 28. 29.
7 Matth. 28: 19. 20. 2 Tim. 2: 2. Tit. 1: 5.

by different names, as a bishop, presbyter or elder, &c.[1] indicative of the duties of the office. All these are by divine right of equal rank,[2] and their duties are principally these: *to expound the word of God, to conduct the public worship of God,*[3] *to administer the sacraments of the church,*[4] *and to admonish men of their duties,*[5] as well as by all proper means, public and private, to edify the church of Christ.

Sec. 2. Those other officers who were endowed with miraculous gifts, and whose instrumentality Christ used in first forming the church, were extraordinary and of temporary standing.

Sec. 3. Pastors are amenable for their conduct to the Synod to which they belong; and that Synod is the tribunal which has the entire jurisdiction over them: excepting in those cases where a regular appeal is obtained to the General Synod, agreeably to Art. III. sec. 5. 1, 2. of the Constitution of General Synod.

Sec. 4. No minister shall knowingly grant to a member of another congregation any privileges of the church, which would be denied to said member by his own pastor.

Sec. 5. It is the sacred duty of every minister so to conduct himself, that his life shall present to his congregation an example of true Christian propriety of deportment: And should any minister of our church be guilty of an open vice, (which may God in mercy prevent!) it shall be the duty of the church-council earnestly to exhort him several times to reformation, and if this should prove ineffectual, or if the case be such as to bring disgrace upon the church, to report him to the Synod.

OF ELDERS AND DEACONS.

Sec. 6. The other officers of the church are Elders and Deacons, who are elected by the members of the church, as their agents to perform some of the duties originally devolving on themselves. The principal duties of Elders are to aid the pastor or pastors in administering the government and discipline of the

1 1 Cor. 4: 1. Eph. 4: 11.

2 Luke 22: 25. 26. Acts 20: 17. compared with 28.

3 Eph. 4: 11. 12. Acts 8: 28. 31. 1 Pet. 5: 1. 2.

4 Matth. 28: 19. 1 Cor. 11: 23. 4: 1. 5 Acts 6: 2. 6.

church; to endeavor to preserve peace and harmony in the church; to visit the congregational schools, and promote the religious education of the children of the church; and to visit the sick and afflicted, and aid in the performance of such other duties as are incumbent on the church-council.

The duties of the Deacons' office are principally these: to lead an exemplary life as commanded in Scripture,[1] to minister unto the poor,[2] extending to their wants and distributing faithfully amongst them the collections which may be made for their use; to assist the pastor in the administration of the Eucharist, to attend and render all necessary service at stated worship; to see that their minister receives a just and adequate support according to the commands of our Lord; to administer the temporal concerns of the church; and to aid in the performance of such other duties as are incumbent on the church-council. Both these officers are elected by the people, and it is their duty to feel the deepest interest in the advancement of piety among the members of the church, and to exert their utmost influence to promote it.

Sec. 7. The elders and deacons are the representatives of the whole church, and each church shall determine the number of their officers and the term of their duration in office; yet in no case shall they serve less than two years, nor more than eight, unless re-elected.

Sec. 8. When persons have been elected to the office of elder or deacon, they shall be inducted into their office according to the form prescribed by the church.* Those congregations which have been in the habit of having trustees, may, if they deem it expedient, still retain them, and continue to them such privileges as they may deem expedient.

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1 1 Tim. 8: 13. and others.

2 Acts 6: 2. 6.

* Vide "Liturgy," &c.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Church-Council.

SEC. 1. The Church-council is the lowest judicatory of the church consisting of the pastor or pastors and all the elders and deacons of a particular church.

SEC. 2. The pastor, together with half the other existing members of the council, and in the necessary absence of the pastor, two thirds of the remaining members of the council, shall constitute a quorum.

SEC. 3. But no business connected with the government or discipline of the church, shall be transacted without the presence of the minister, unless his absence is unavoidable or voluntary, or the church be vacant. And when present the pastor shall be *ex officio* chairman.

SEC. 4. The church-council[1] shall have the superintendence of the temporal concerns of the church, and shall see that they are administered with wisdom, faithfulness and justice. They shall also elect a deputy to represent them at the annual synodical meeting.

SEC. 5. It shall be the duty of the council to admit to membership adults, who shall make application, and whom, on mature examination, they shall judge to be possessed of the qualifications hereafter specified.[2] They shall be obedient subjects of divine grace—that is, they must either be genuine Christians, or satisfy the church-council that they are sincerely endeavouring to become such. Also to admit to the communion of the church, all those who were admitted to church-membership in their infancy, and whom on like examination, they shall judge possessed of the above mentioned qualifications. No one shall be considered a fit subject for confirmation who has not previously attended a course of religious lectures, delivered by the pastor on the most important doctrines and principles of religion; unless the pastor should be satis-

[1] 1 Thess. 5: 12. 13.

[2] Mark 16: 16. John 3: 5. Acts 8: 12. 16: 14. 15.

fied that the applicant's attainments are adequate without this attendance. And when adults are admitted to membership, their baptism shall if possible be performed publicly before the church: and when members who were baptized in their infancy are admitted to full communion, they shall in the same public manner *confirm* their baptismal vows according to the form of confirmation customary in the church.

Sec. 6. It is recommended to the church-council to keep a complete list of all the communing members of the church.

Sec. 7. If any member of the church-council should conduct himself in a manner unworthy of his office, he may be accused before the council, and if found guilty, his case shall be referred to the whole church for decision.

Sec. 8. It shall be the duty of the council to administer the discipline of the church, on all those whose conduct is inconsistent with their Christian profession, or who entertain fundamental errors.[1] To this end they shall have power to cite any of their church-members to appear before them; and to endeavour to obtain other witnesses when the case may require it. It shall further be the duty of the council, when any member offends, first privately to admonish him, or if necessary to call him to an account, and when they shall deem these measures ineffectual, to suspend or ex-communicate him; that is to debar him from the privileges peculiar to church-membership, according to the precepts of the New Testament laid down in this form. It shall also be their duty to restore[2] those subjects of suspension or excommunication, to all the privileges of the church, who shall manifest sincere repentance. Every act of ex-communication or of restoration may be published to the church, if deemed necessary by the majority of the council.

Sec. 9. The church-council may at any time be convened by the minister; and it shall be his duty to call a meeting when requested by two members of the council, or by one fourth of the electors of the church, or when directed by the Synod.

Sec. 10. It shall be the duty of the church-council to watch

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[1] 1 Cor. 5: 7. 13.

[2] 2 Cor. 2: 7. Gal. 6: 1.

over the religious education of the children of the church, and to see that they be occasionally collected, for the purpose of being taught the Catechism of the church, and instructed in the duties and principles of the Christian religion. The council of every church shall have the management of the school-house attached to that church, and shall be *ex-officio* trustees of the same. They shall endeavour to obtain pious, well qualified and *faithful* teachers, and to see that the children of the church, as far as practicable, attend this school, and that they be there also taught the Catechism of the church, and in general the duties of religion. In all places where there is not yet a school-house attached to the church, they shall encourage the people and endeavour to have one erected. And no person shall teach in any of our congregational school-houses without the permission of the church-council.

Sec. 11. The church-council shall keep a record of their proceedings, of all the baptisms and marriages, and of persons admitted to sacramental communion; an abstract of which shall be annually sent to the Synod for inspection.

Sec. 12. In all cases of appeal from the decisions of the church-council, the council shall take no further measures grounded on their decision until the sentence has been reviewed by the Synod. But if the decision appealed from be a sentence of suspension or ex-communication, it shall immediately take effect and continue in force until reversed by the Synod. And in every case of appeal, the church-council shall send a detailed and correct account of their proceeding in the case, and of the charges and evidence on both sides.

Sec. 13. Any vacant congregation also may send a delegate to lay its concerns before the Synod: And the church-councils of each clerical district may annually send to the Synod as many lay delegates as there are ministers present at the Synod from said district.

CHAPTER V.

Of Church Members.

Sec. 1. The members of any particular church are all those members of the *visible* (see Chap. II. Sect. 1.) church, who are associated together under some form of Christian government and discipline, for divine worship and the better attainment of the objects of the Christian institution.

Sec. 2. Every church member is amenable to the council, and must appear before them when cited, and submit to the discipline of the church regularly administered.[1]

Sec. 3. It is the duty of every church member to lead a Christian life: that is, to perform all the duties required of him or her in scripture. Thus it is the duty of adults to perform all the Christian duties, not to neglect the public worship of God;[2] nor the participation of the Lord's Supper[3] whenever an opportunity is afforded. It is the duty of parents to educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,[4] to teach them the doctrines of the church, and to subject them to the ordinances of the same.[5] And when young members reach the years of maturity and have attained the natural ability to partake of the Lord's Supper in the manner commanded, it is their duty to be worthy communicants at the Lord's table.

Sec. 4. Any member being dissatisfied with the decision of the church-council relative to himself, may appeal to the Synod. But in every such case, the applicant shall give notice to the church-council of his intention, either immediately, or within two weeks of the time when the sentence was made known to him; and shall specify to them the reasons of his dissatisfaction and the ground of his appeal.

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1 Tit. 3: 10. Matth. 18: 17. 18.

2 Heb. 10: 25. Col. 3: 16. Acts 2: 46. Matth. 18: 20. Exod. 20: 8. Psalm 84: 2. 9. 11.

3 1 Cor. 11: 24. 25.

4 Eph. 6: 4.

5 Eph. 6: 4. 2 Tim. 3: 14. 15.

Sec. 5. It is recommended, that when a member of one of our churches moves into the bounds of another, and wishes to be admitted to the privileges of the church, he shall bring with him a certificate of good standing from his former pastor.

Sec. 6. It is recommended as accordant with the principles of the New Testament, that the members of the church ought not to prosecute each other before a civil tribunal, until they have first made an attempt to settle their point of difference through the mediation of their Christian brethren.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Elections.

Sec. 1. All congregational elections must be published by the church-council to the congregation at least two weeks before the election.

Sec. 2. The council may publish a congregational meeting for any lawful purpose when they shall deem it necessary, and they shall be compelled so to do when required by one third of the lawful electors of the church.

Sec. 3. The electors of any particular church in our connexion, are all those who are in full communion with the same, who submit to its government and discipline regularly administered, and who contribute according to their ability and engagements to all its necessary expenditures.

Sec. 4. At all elections for *Elders* or *Deacons*, no person may be elected to either of said offices who is not a member in full communion with said church.

Sec. 5. When an election is held in a vacant congregation for a pastor, two thirds of all the electors shall be necessary to an election, and if the votes were not unanimous, it is recommended that the presiding officer shall invite the minority to concur in the decision. He shall give the members a certificate, signed by himself, of the election. This certificate, with a statement of the sup-

port[1] which they promise him, shall be a legal call to the pastor therein specified.

Sec. 6. At elections for members of the church-council, the existing council shall nominate twice as many persons as are to be elected, and the church may nominate half as many more, from whom the officers may be chosen.

Sec. 7. If from any cause, a vacancy occurs in the council in the interval between the stated elections, it shall be filled without delay by a special election, and the person thus elected shall serve until the regular expiration of the time of the member in whose place he was elected.

CHAPTER VII.

Of Prayer Meetings, &c.

Sec. 1. As Prayer is one of the most necessary duties of a Christian,[2] and as Prayer-meetings have been of the utmost importance and usefulness, it is therefore most earnestly recommended to the different churches in our connexion, to establish and promote them among our members. These meetings may be held in the church, school-house, or in private houses; and their object is the spiritual edification of the persons present; but the utmost precaution must ever be observed, that God, who is a Spirit, be worshipped in spirit and in truth—that they be characterized by that solemnity and decorum which ought ever to attend divine worship; and that no disorder be tolerated, or any thing that is calculated to interrupt the devotions of those who are convened, or prevent their giving the fullest attention to him who is engaged in leading the meeting,—in short, that according to the injunctions of the Apostle, all things be done "decently and in order."

Sec. 2. It is solemnly recommended to all church-members,

[1] 1 Tim. 5: 8. 1 Cor. 9: 14. Luke 10: 7.

[2] 1 Thess. 5: 17. Luke 18: 1. Col. 4: 2.

and more especially to the members of the council, to make daily worship in their family a sacred duty.[1]

Sec. 3. It is recommended that no one shall be permitted in future to act as a sponsor, unless he or she be in full communion with the Christian church.

Sec. 4. It is expedient that no person be permitted to preach in any of the churches in our connexion, except by consent of the pastor and council of said church, and in the absence of the pastor, by permission of the council.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of Synods.

Sec. 1. It was found necessary and profitable in the primitive church, to have an occasional meeting of different individual churches, for the purpose of consultation and mutual encouragement, in preserving their purity and promoting their welfare.[2] This apostolical custom is retained in the Lutheran Church, under the name of Conference, Synod and General Synod.

Sec. 2. A Synod consists of all the ministers and licensed candidates, and an equal number of lay-delegates, within a certain district.

Sec. 3. The number of lay-votes can never exceed that of the ordained clergyman and licentiates: and if a lay-delegate be present from a district from which there is no minister present in the Synod, he shall have a seat and the liberty of speech, but no vote.

Sec. 4. It shall be the duty of each Synod, to see that the rules of government and discipline prescribed in this Formula, are observed by all the congregations and ministers within their bounds, to receive appeals from decisions of church-councils, and of Special Conferences when regularly brought before them, and

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[1] Acts 2: 44. Eph. 6: 4. Acts 10: 12. Jer. 10: 25.

[2] Acts 15: 2. 6. 22. 23—28. Acts 11: 22. 30. 21: 17. 18. Acts 6:

review and reverse or confirm the decisions to which they refer; to examine and decide on all charges against ministers and licentiates, that of heterodoxy alone excepted; to form and change ministerial districts; to attend to any business relating to their churches, which is regularly brought before them, to provide supplies for destitute congregations, and to devise and execute all suitable measures for the promotion of piety and the general prosperity of the church, not otherwise disposed of in this Formula.

Sec. 5. To this end the Synod and Ministerium shall have power to cite any church-members within their bounds to appear before them; and to endeavour to obtain other witnesses, when the case may require it.

Sec. 6. If any congregation, hitherto in connexion with a Synod, should refuse to observe the resolutions of said Synod, or the provisions of this Formula, it shall be excluded from connexion from said Synod during the time of its refusal; nor shall any other Synod, nor any Lutheran minister or licentiate, take charge of it without special permission of the President. Provided, however, that if the charter of an incorporated congregation be at variance with any articles of this Formula, said charter shall have precedence of those articles with which it is in conflict.

Sec. 7. Any congregation may become connected with the Synod within whose bounds it is situated, by acceding to the provisions of this Formula, and making some annual contribution towards defraying the necessary expenses of said Synod. For this purpose an annual collection ought to be held in each congregation.

Sec. 8. At least one meeting of each Synod shall be held every year, at such time and place as may have been determined on.

Sec. 9. No minister or licentiate shall be absent from the meeting of the Synod without the most urgent necessity. In case of his absence, he shall, if possible, send to the Synod a written apology, for his absence. Voluntary ministerial engagements shall not be regarded as a sufficient excuse. Any minister or licentiate violating the provisions of this section, shall be called to account by the President at the next meeting.

Sec. 10. These written apologies, as well as all other letters and papers intended for the Synod or Ministerium, ought to be addressed to the President.

Sec. 11. The minister of the place in which the Synod is held, with the church council, shall endeavour to provide for the entertainment of the ministers, candidates and lay-delegates, by Christian friends.

Sec. 12. All the members of the Synod shall endeavour to assemble on the evening preceding the day appointed.

Sec. 13. Divine worship shall be celebrated, during the meeting of the Synod, as often as may be convenient, and consistent with the business of the Synod.

Sec. 14. Ministers in good standing in other Synods, or in any sister churches, who may happen to be present, or who appear as delegates from said bodies, may be received as advisory members, but cannot vote in any decisions of the Synod.

CHAPTER IX.

Officers of the Synod.

Sec. 1. The officers of each Synod shall be a President, Secretary and Treasurer, who are also the officers of the Ministerium.

Sec. 2. All these officers are annually chosen by ballot, from among the ordained ministers regularly belonging to the Synod, by a majority of the votes of the ministers, licentiates and lay-delegates present. The same persons shall not be eligible for more than three successive years.

PRESIDENT.

Sec. 3. The President shall deliver a synodical discourse at the meeting of every Synod: and he shall, in connexion with the pastor of the place, appoint the other individuals who are to preach during the session.

Sec. 4. He shall at the beginning of every Synod, make a written report of all the official business transacted and letters received by him since the last meeting, and of all the important events which have occurred relating to his Synod, and may recommend for their consideration any measures, which he may deem necessary or calculated to promote the cause of God. This report shall be laid on the table, and dealt with as with all other papers coming before the body.

Sec. 5. He presides at all the meetings of the Synod and Ministerium.

Sec. 6. The President has a right to take part in the discussions as well as any other member. When the house is equally divided on any question, he has the casting vote. In all other cases he has no suffrage, except when an election is made by ballot, and then he has not the casting vote.

Sec. 7. The President shall preserve order, not suffer more than one member to speak at a time, secure to each person liberty to speak without interruption from others, and shall prevent a speaker from deviating from the subject before the house.

Sec. 8. The President shall take care that each subject be duly considered before a decision be made. He shall distinctly rehearse each motion, when no one has any further observations to offer, and take the votes of the house on the same.

Sec. 9. When the votes are called for, they are to be given simply by Yea and Nay, and no further observations are then admissible.

Sec. 10. The President has the appointment of all committees which are not to be elected by ballot, or otherwise: and every motion for the formation of a committee shall specify in what way it is to be formed.

Sec. 11. It is an important part of his duty to give council to every member of the Synod when he deems it expedient, and particularly to admonish and advise every erring brother. If accusation has been lodged against any member of this body according to Ch. III. Sec. 5. or if he has reason to believe that any minister or licentiate is living in any material violation of the

rules of this Formula, it shall be his duty to call upon the individual to relieve his character from said imputation, before the Synod or Ministerium.

Sec. 12. Should the President remove from the limits of the Synod or depart this life, then the Secretary shall succeed him, and discharge the duties of the President, until the next Synod.

SECRETARY.

Sec. 13. The Secretary shall keep a faithful and accurate account of all the proceedings of the Synod and Ministerium; carefully preserve all the papers, the seal, &c. of the Synod subject to their direction, and shall do all the official writing of the Synod not otherwise provided for.

Sec. 14. He shall give notice (either by circular or in the public papers, as each Synod may direct,) to each minister and licentiate belonging to the Synod, of the time and place of the synodical meeting, at least six weeks previous to the time appointed.

Sec. 15. He is to keep a register of the names of all the ministers and licensed candidates, arranged according to their age in office, and also of the congregations whether vacant or not, connected with the Synod.

Sec. 16. If the accumulation of business should render it necessary, the President may appoint an assistant Secretary, whose office shall expire at the close of the meeting of the Synod.

Sec. 17. If in the recess of the Synod, the Secretary should remove into the bounds of another Synod, or should depart this life, the President shall require the Archives, the seal, and all other property of the Synod to be delivered to him, and shall retain the charge of them until the next session of the Synod, when he shall appoint a Secretary pro tem.

Sec. 18. Unless the Archives are otherwise disposed of by the Synod, they shall be in the charge and custody of the Secretary. Any minister or delegate of a congregation connected with

said Synod shall have free access to them; but no part of them shall be allowed to be taken away or destroyed.

TREASURER.

SEC. 19. The Treasurer shall take charge of all the monies belonging to the Synod, and shall keep them subject to its order. He shall keep, and present at each annual meeting, a detailed and faithful account of the state of the Treasury.

SEC. 20. Should the Treasurer, during the recess of the Synod, remove out of the bounds of the Synod, or be removed by death, the President shall have all the monies, certificates, bonds and documents belonging to the Synod, delivered into his hands, and shall have the charge of them until the next Synodical session.

CHAPTER X.

Other Members of a Synod.

SEC. 1. It is the duty of every ordained minister, licentiate and lay-delegate of every Synod, not only to observe the provisions of this Constitution himself; but also, as far as is in his power, see that it is obeyed by all connected with it.

ORDAINED MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES OR CANDIDATES.

SEC. 2. It is recommended to every ordained minister and licentiate, to aid in circulating among the members of his charge, the books proposed by the Synod and General Synod for use.

SEC. 3. No minister or licentiate shall interfere with the congregations of another, by preaching or performing other ministerial duties in them, except by his request or consent, if present; nor in his absence, if he have reason to think that any evil would result to said church.

Sec. 4. Any minister or licentiate in good standing, who removes from the bounds of one Synod into those of another, shall, on application to the President, receive a certificate under his signature, of his honorable dismission; and such a certificate shall be required by the Synod into which he removes, when he applies for admission into it.

Sec. 5. Every ordained minister has the right to leave his charge and remove to another whenever he believes it is his duty to do so; yet he must give the President timely notice of his intended removal.

Sec. 6. A licensed candidate shall have liberty to visit vacant congregations, either upon receiving an invitation from them, or upon the advice of the Synod or President.

Sec. 7. After a licentiate has a stated charge he shall be restricted to it, and shall not resign it without the consent of the Ministerium, or, in its recess, of the President.

Sec. 8. A licentiate has power to perform all the ministerial functions during the time specified in his license.

Sec. 9. In addition to the obligations of ministers specified Ch. III. Sec. 1. it is the duty of licentiates particularly to devote all their leisure time to their personal improvement and knowledge and grace, to receive counsel from the President, and to apply to him for advice in cases of difficulty.

Sec. 10. Every licentiate must keep a general journal of his ministerial acts, which, with a few sermons of his own composition, he must deliver, or send annually for the inspection of the Ministerium.

LAY-DELEGATES.

Sec. 11. Each lay-delegate, entitled to a seat by this Constitution, shall have equal rights with the ministers in all business belonging to the Synod; that is, may take part in the debates, offer resolutions and vote on all Synodical questions.

CHAPTER XI.

Order of Business.

It is recommended, that the transactions of the Synod be conducted as follows:

1. At the time appointed for the meeting, the members present shall assemble, and if four ordained ministers and two lay-delegates be present, they shall constitute a quorum.

2. The President shall open the first session by a prayer, after the brethren have unitedly sung an hymn. And every session of the Synod and Ministerium shall be opened and closed with prayer. In the absence of the President, the first prayer shall be made by the Secretary, and if he also be absent, by one of the elder ministers present.

3. After prayer the Secretary shall call the names of all the ordained ministers and licentiates belonging to the Synod, and note the absentees.

4. The lay-delegates shall then exhibit the certificates of their appointment, and their names be registered by the Secretary as members of the Synod.

5. The President shall make his report (Chap. IX. Sec. 4.) as the last official act of his office, and then inform the members, that

6. The election of officers for the ensuing year is now to be attended to.

7. Admission of delegates or ministers from other ecclesiastical bodies: according to Chap. VIII. Sec. 14.

8. The minutes of the last Synod may be read.

9. All papers intended for the Synod or Ministerium are to be handed in, and verbal notice may be given of any important business intended to be brought before the Synod.

10. The Secretary shall then number the papers as arranged by the President, after which they shall be taken up and discussed before the whole house in numerical order, or be first referred

to committees, as the house may direct. The reports of Committees may be heard and acted on at any time, and the intervals filled up by the succeeding items.

11. Each minister shall be called on by the Secretary for the record of persons baptized and confirmed, as well as of the regular communing members belonging to his churches (Chap. IV. Sec. 11.) as also of the number of schools.

12. The Treasurer's account shall be heard.

13. The number of vacant congregations be inquired into, and provision made for them.

14. Promiscuous business.

15. Election of delegates to the General Synod, or to other ecclesiastical bodies, and of Directors of the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

16. Choice of the time and place for the next meeting of Synod.

17. Dissolution of the Synod, and annunciation of the time of the ministerial session.

18. Should the President or Secretary be absent at the proper time for opening a session, the members present may elect others pro tempore.

CHAPTER XII.

Process against a Minister.

Sec. 1. As the honour and success of the gospel depend very much on the character of its ministers, every Synod ought to guard with the utmost care and impartiality the conduct of its members.

Sec. 2. All Christians should be very cautious in giving credit or circulation to an ill report of any man, and especially of a minister of the gospel; if any man knows a minister to be guilty of a private censurable fault, he should warn him in private. If

this prove fruitless, he should apply to the church-council, who shall proceed as specified in Chap. III. Sec. 5.

Sec. 3. If accusation be lodged according to Chap. III. Sec. 5. with the President within four months of the time of the next Synodical meeting, he shall defer the matter to said meeting ; yet if the charge be one of drunkenness, lewdness, circulating fundamental errors in doctrine, or a higher crime, he shall immediately direct the accused to suspend all his ministerial duties until his case is decided. If such accusation is lodged with the President at an earlier date, he shall if the charge be one of drunkenness, lewdness, circulating fundamental error in doctrine, or higher crime, immediately give notice to all the members of the Conference district to which the accused belongs, to meet without delay at a suitable place, and institute a formal investigation of the case, according to the principles of this Formula. The Chairman of said Conference district shall immediately fix the time and place of the meeting, and give at least fifteen days' notice of the same to each minister in the district, and also to the parties concerned.

Sec. 4. If the Synod is not divided into Conference Districts, the President shall appoint a Committee of three ordained ministers, shall fix the time and place of their meeting, and give all the notices as above required of the Chairman of the Conference district.

Sec. 5. Any three members of the Conference or of the Committee above named, shall have power to proceed and hold a fair and impartial investigation of the case, and to take all such measures as may be just and necessary to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused.

Sec. 6. If the accused confess, and the matter be base and flagitious, such as drunkenness, lewdness, circulating fundamental error in doctrine, or a higher crime, however penitent he may be, he must immediately be suspended from the exercise of his office, and if thought expedient, a time be appointed for him publicly to confess to the congregation and the world his guilt and penitence.

Sec. 7. If a minister, accused of atrocious crimes, being duly notified refuses to attend the investigation, he shall still be immediately suspended from office.

Sec. 8. If the accused deny the charge, and yet on examination of the evidence is found guilty; the Conference or Committee shall nevertheless proceed to pass sentence on him.

Sec. 9. The highest punishment which can be inflicted by a Special Conference or Committee appointed as above specified, is suspension from clerical functions; and this sentence is to be reported to the next meeting of the Synod, and remains in force until reversed by the Synod or Ministerium, as the case may be.

Sec. 10. Any minister intending to appeal from the decision of a Conference or Committee, shall give notice of it to his accusers within three weeks of the time when the decision was made; that both parties may be prepared for a new trial.

Sec. 11. Special Conferences not specially convened for the purpose, may attend to any charges of importance against a minister within their bounds, if all the parties concerned are prepared and willing to proceed.

Sec. 12. If at any time, accusation be lodged with the President, according to Chap. III. Sec. 5. for a less crime than those above specified Sec. 3. he shall take no other steps in the case than to write a letter to the accused and accusers, exhorting them to mutual forbearance, and referring them to the next Synod.

Sec. 13. If accusation against a minister be made immediately to the Synod, and the Synod believe themselves in possession of all the evidence necessary to a just decision, the case may be immediately examined and sentence passed. But if the necessary evidence be not before them, and the crime be such as is specified in Sec. 3. they shall appoint a meeting of the Conference to which the accused belongs, or, if there be no Conference district, of a Committee who shall proceed as above specified.

Sec. 14. If a minister be found guilty of drunkenness, fundamental heresy, lewdness or higher crimes, his sentence of suspension shall not be removed until after some time of penitent, humble and edifying conduct. And he cannot be restored by any ju-

dicatory but the Synod, or by the Ministerium, if his case was one of fundamental heresy.

Sec. 15. If the common report of a minister's guilt of any of the charges above specified, be such as seriously to injure the cause of religion, and his own churches do not proceed against him, it shall be the duty of any other minister or layman, having obtained two other signatures of credible men, to report the case to the President.

CHAPTER XIII.

Vacant Congregations.

Sec. 1. Vacant congregations which cannot be immediately supplied with a minister, are advised to assemble on the Lord's day, to select some member of the church, of suitable capacities and character, to conduct the exercises, and engage in the worship of God, as recommended in Chap. VII. Sec. 1.

Sec. 2. It is also recommended, that at these meetings, a portion of the Scriptures, of the prayers contained in the Liturgy, or some select sermon, such as are approved by the President of the Synod, be read.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of Missions.

As the blessed Saviour left to his followers the command: Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;[1] the Synods shall regard it as a sacred duty to adopt, from time to time, such measures as they may deem best calculated to execute this solemn injunction.

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1 Matth. 28. 19. 20.

CHAPTER XV.

Election of Delegates and Directors.

The election of delegates to the General Synod and of Directors of the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, shall always be held by ballot, and a licensed candidate shall not be eligible to either of these offices.

CHAPTER XVI.

Special Conferences.

Sec. 1. It is earnestly recommended that each Synod divide itself into two or more districts, for the purpose of holding Special Conferences; which may be held either on a week-day or sabbath.

Sec. 2. It is desirable, where ministers do not live too far apart, that at least two Conferences should be held annually in each district. They ought to last two days, and the chief business to be performed at them is to awaken and convert sinners and to edify believers by close practical preaching of the gospel.

Sec. 3. The state of religion in the churches of the district ought to be enquired into, and at least an hour be spent by the Conference alone in conversation on subjects relating to pastoral experience.

Sec. 4. These districts ought to contain between five and ten ministers, and when the number becomes greater, a new district ought to be formed.

Sec. 5. These Conferences ought to be held alternately, in some congregation of each minister and licentiate belonging to the district.

Sec. 6. Special Conferences may examine into any business of congregations, which is regularly referred to them, and give their advice; but no Conference shall, under any pretext whatever, perform any business connected with the licensure or ordination of candidates for the ministry.

Sec. 7. Lay-delegates may also be sent to these Conferences, under the same regulations as to Synods, if it is thought advisable by the Synod.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ministerial Session.

Sec. 1. The clergy shall then hold a meeting consisting exclusively of Scripture elders, that is, preachers,[1] for the purpose of attending to those duties which Christ and his apostles enjoined upon them alone, viz. Examination, Licensure and Ordination of candidates for the ministry. This meeting is called the Ministerium or Presbytery,[2] by which, in Scripture, is meant ministers alone.

Sec. 2. Licensed candidates may be present at the Ministerial meeting, unless requested to withdraw, and may take part in discussions, but have no vote.

Sec. 3. The Ministerium shall also be the proper body, by whom all charges of heresy against a minister, are to be examined and decided: as also all appeals from the decision of a church-council on a charge of heresy against a layman, or from the decision of a Special Conference on a similar charge against a minister.

Sec. 4. When ordained ministers of other religious denominations, make application for admission into connexion with a Synod, the Ministerium shall be the body to decide on the case.

Sec. 5. A majority of two thirds of the ordained ministers shall be required, either for the licensure of an applicant as well as the renewal of his license, or the ordination of a licensed candidate, or the admission of an ordained minister of another denomination.

Sec. 6. No minister or licentiate, coming from a Foreign Country, shall be received as a member of any Synod, until after a residence of two years in this country, and unexceptionable deport-

[1] Acts 20: 17. 28.

[2] 1 Tim. 4: 14.

ment during that time. Excepting only, that if an ordained minister comes well recommended for piety and learning, by a Consistorium, or a number of individuals known to the Ministerium as orthodox and evangelical, and if the Ministerium believe they can safely confide in the testimonials, they may receive him for twelve months, after which the vote for his permanent reception as a regular member shall be taken, and the case decided according to Sec. 5.

Sec. 7. All business not specifically entrusted to the Ministerium in this Formula, shall belong to the Synod.

Sec. 8. The order of business in the Ministerium may be as follows:

1. After the session has been opened with prayer, the President shall communicate any business which he may have to report or propose.

2. The licentiates shall hand in their licenses, sermons, and journals, which ought if possible to be read by the licentiate before the whole body. If want of time renders this inconvenient, Committees ought then to be appointed to examine and report on them.

3. Applicants for licensure are examined.

4. After the examination of the applicants and of the sermons and journals of licentiates, the applicants and licentiates may be desired to withdraw, and the question of their licensure and renewal of license or ordination, be discussed and decided.

5. The licensure and ordination may be performed either in the Ministerium, or at an appointed hour, before a promiscuous assembly.

6. Promiscuous matters relative to Ministerial business may then be attended to.

7. Some time then shall be spent in conversation on pastoral experience.

8. The session closed as directed Ch. XII. Sec. 2.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Examination and Licensure of Candidates.

SEC. 1. The examination shall be conducted by an Examining Committee of two or more ordained ministers, appointed for the purpose at the meeting of the previous year, or by a Committee appointed at the time. As these examinations may be highly interesting and useful to the whole Ministerium, and will be more faithfully performed if public, it is earnestly recommended that they be performed before the whole body.

SEC. 2. After the examination by the Committee is ended, every member of the Ministerium has the right to ask the applicant any additional questions.

SEC. 3. The examination shall embrace at least the following subjects, viz. Personal piety and the motives of the applicant for seeking the holy office, the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, the Evidences of Christianity, Natural and Revealed Theology, Church History, Pastoral Theology, the rules of Sermonizing, and Church Government.

SEC. 4. No Ministerium shall, in any case whatever, license an individual whom they do not believe to be hopefully pious. Nor shall any applicant, extraordinary cases excepted, be licensed, whom the Ministeriun do not find possessed of a competent acquaintance with the subjects named in Sec. 3. the Hebrew language alone excepted.

SEC. 5. The *Ceremony of Licensure* shall be performed as follows: viz. after an address from the President as prescribed in the Liturgy, he shall read the duties and privileges of licentiates in Ch. 10. Sec. 6.—10. and then propose to him the following questions:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice ?[1]

2. Do you believe that the fundamental doctrines of the word of

[1] 2 Tim. 3: 16. Eph. 2: 20.

God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession ?[1]

3. Do you promise, by the aid of God, faithfully to perform all the duties enjoined on you in this Formula, and to submit yourselves to its rules of Government and Discipline, so long as you remain a member of a Lutheran Synod ?[2]

Sec. 6. These questions being answered in the affirmative, the President offers up a suitable prayer, delivers him his license, and concludes with a short address as directed in the Liturgy.

Sec. 7. All licenses shall extend to the time of the next annual meeting of the Ministerium, and shall be renewed as a matter of course, whether the licentiate be present or not, unless satisfactory reasons are known to the Ministerium, which render a renewal inexpedient. And if for any reason, no meeting be held at the appointed time, the licenses granted by said Ministerium shall remain in force, until revoked at a subsequent meeting.

Sec. 8. If a licentiate after some time of probation, does in the judgment of the Ministerium, prove himself unqualified for the duties of the ministry, his license shall be withdrawn.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ordination.

Sec. 1. Whenever the Ministerium has decided that an individual shall be ordained, the ceremony may be performed, either at the time by the assembled Ministerium, or if preferred, in the church by which he has been called, by the Special Conference, or by a Committee appointed for the purpose by the President.

Sec. 2. The Ceremony of ordination, wherever performed, shall be as follows: viz.

1. A sermon shall be preached by a person previously ap-

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[1] 2 Tim. 1 : 13.

[2] 2 Pet. 5: 5.

pointed, on the nature, duties and responsibilities of the ministerial office.

2. The President of the Ministerium, or the Chairman of the Conference or Committee, shall then, after a short address, such as is contained in the Liturgy, propose to the candidate the following questions:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you believe that the fundamental doctrines of the word of God, are taught in a manner substantially correct, in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession?

3. Do you promise, by the aid of God, faithfully to perform all the duties enjoined on you in this Formula, and to submit yourself to its rules of Government and Discipline, so long as you remain a member of any Lutheran Synod?

4. Do you believe that in seeking the ministerial office you are influenced by a sincere love to God your Saviour, and desire to promote his glory in the welfare of men?

5. Do you promise faithfully and zealously to preach the truths of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as contained in the Holy Scriptures?

SEC. 3. These questions being answered in the affirmative, the candidate shall kneel down, when the President or presiding minister shall ordain him after the apostolic example by prayer[1] and the laying on of the hands of the ministry[2] i. e. presbytery. The candidate shall then rise, and the officiating minister, and after him the ordained ministers present shall take him by the right hand and welcome him to take part in the ministry with them.[3] (The ceremonies may then be concluded by the benediction. But if the ordination was performed in a church to which he is called, the presiding minister shall proceed without any interruption with the ceremonies of installation.)

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[1] Acts 13: 2. 3. [2] 1 Tim. 4: 14. [3] Acts 1: 25.

CHAPTER XX.

Installation.

Sec. 1. He shall then propose to the minister just ordained this question: viz. Are you willing to take charge of this congregation, and do you promise by the grace of God, faithfully to discharge the duties of a Christian pastor to them?

Sec. 2. This question being answered in the affirmative, the President shall ask the congregation:

Do you desire to receive ——— as the regular pastor of your church (or churches) to which you have given him a call? And do you promise faithfully to discharge towards him the duties, which a Christian congregation owe to their pastor?

These questions being answered in the affirmative; The presiding minister shall solemnly pronounce the individual installed to be the regular pastor of said charge; and conclude with the benediction.

Sec. 3. If a minister already ordained, is to be installed, the ceremony of Installation shall be preceded by a sermon on the relation between a minister and the people of his charge, or on some suitable subject, by a person previously appointed. The minister shall then be formally installed, according to Sec. 1. 2., after which, a charge may be delivered by a minister previously appointed, to the pastor and his people on their respective duties, and the whole be closed with the benediction.

P. S. As different Synods might differ in opinion relative to matters of a minor nature, so many particulars only as are necessary to general uniformity, and harmony of operation among the churches, were introduced into this Formula. Each Synod adopting this Constitution, has the power to form such by-laws, as may seem proper to itself.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE EVANG. LUTHERAN CHURCH

IN THE UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA.

[Translated from the original German copy.]

JESUS CHRIST, the Supreme Head of His Church, having prescribed no entire specific directory for government and discipline, and every section of his church being left at full liberty to make such regulations to that effect, as may be most adapted to its situation and circumstances, therefore—Relying upon God our Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit in the Word of God, for the promotion of the practice of brotherly love, to the furtherance of Christian concord, to the firm establishment and continuance of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—We, the Deputies of the "German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania and the neighbouring States," of the "German and English Evangelical Lutheran Synod in the State of North Carolina and the bordering States," of the "Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium in the State of New York, and the neighbouring States and Countries," and of the "Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland and Virginia, &c." for ourselves and our successors, do adopt the following fundamental articles: viz.

ARTICLE I.

The Name, Style and Title of this Convention shall be: "*The Evangelical Lutheran General Synod of the United States of North America.*"

ARTICLE II.

This General Synod shall consist of the Deputies from the several Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conventions in the United States, who may join themselves thereunto, and be duly acknowledged as members thereof, in the following ratio, namely:

Every Synodical body, or Synod (whether of Ministers only, or of Ministers and Lay Deputies together) containing six Ministers, may send one; if it contain fourteen, two; if twenty-five, three; if forty, four; if sixty, five; and if it contain eighty-six Ministers or upwards, six Deputies of the rank of ordained Ministers, and an equal number of Lay Deputies.

Each Deputy, appearing in the General Synod according to this ratio, shall, except as is hereinafter provided, enjoy an equal right and vote with all others. Every Synod may choose its Deputies in such a way and manner as to them may seem proper; and shall pay the travelling expenses of the same to and from the General Synod, until the General Synod shall have established for itself a treasury from which the future expenses may be discharged.

ARTICLE III.

The business of the General Synod shall be as follows, namely:

Sec. 1. The General Synod shall examine the Proceedings of the several Synods and Ministeriums belonging to this association, in order that they may obtain some knowledge of the existing state and condition of the Church. The several Synods, therefore, shall transmit as many copies of their proceedings to the General Synod, as there shall be members contained in the General Synod.

Sec. 2. With regard to all *Books* and *Writings* proposed for public use in the church, the General Synod shall act as a joint committee of the special Synods and Ministeriums, after the following manner, viz.

1. The General Synod shall examine all books and writings such as catechisms, forms of liturgy, collections of hymns, or confessions of faith, proposed by the special Synods for public use, and give their wellconsidered advice, counsel or opinion concerning

the same. No Synod, therefore, and no Ministerium, standing in connexion with this General Synod, shall set forth any new book or writing of the kind above mentioned, for public use in the church, without having previously transmitted a full and complete copy thereof to the General Synod, for the purpose of receiving their said advice, counsel or opinion.

2. Whenever the General Synod shall deem it proper or necessary, they may propose to the special Synods or Ministeriums, new books or writings of the kind mentioned above, for general or special, public use. Every proposal of the kind, the several or respective Synods and Ministeriums shall duly consider, and if they, or any one of them, shall be of opinion, that the said book or books, writing or writings, will not conduce to the end proposed, then, and in such a case, it is hoped, that the reasons of such opinion will be transmitted to the next convention of the General Synod, in order that the same may be entered on their journal.

3. But no General Synod can be allowed to possess, or arrogate unto itself, " the power of *prescribing* among us *uniform ceremonies of religion* for every part of the Church ;" or to introduce such alterations in matters appertaining to the faith, or to the mode of publishing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, (the Son of God, and ground of our faith and hope) as might in any way tend to burden the consciences of the brethren in Christ.

Sec. 3. If hereafter twenty-five ministers, dwelling together, within a certain marked boundary, fifteen of whom, being ordained ministers, shall apply to the General Synod for permission to create within themselves a Special Ministerium, and the Synod or Ministerium to which they have previously belonged, do not, upon due notice given of their intention so to apply, make any serious or important objection, then the General Synod shall have power to grant the permission ; and if within the bounds of a whole state no special Synod or Ministerium shall yet have existed, and six ordained ministers residing therein shall apply for permission to create within themselves a special Ministerium, the General Synod shall authorize the establishment of a new Synod and Ministerium within the said State. But until the permission or authority be

thus formally conceded, no Deputies of a new Synod or Ministerium shall be acknowledged to have a seat and vote in the General Synod.

Sec. 4. With regard to the grades in the Ministry, the General Synod may give to the several Ministeriums well considered advice, wherein the circumstances of time, place and condition must be duly contemplated, and a beneficial uniformity, and actual equality of rank among the several ministers, must, as much as possible, be had in view. The General Synod shall also advise such rules and regulations among the several Synods and Ministeriums, as may prevent unpleasant and unfriendly collisions, that might otherwise arise out of any differences of grades existing among them, or from any whatever other possible causes.

Sec. 5. The General Synod shall not be looked upon as a Tribunal of Appeal; it may, however, be employed in the following cases and after the following manner:

1. The General Synod may give advice or opinion, when complaints shall be brought before them by whole Synods, Ministeriums, Congregations, or individual Ministers, concerning doctrine or discipline. They shall however be extremely careful, that the consciences of the Ministers of the Gospel be not burdened with human inventions, laws or devices, and that no one be oppressed by reason of differences of opinion on nonfundamental doctrines.

2. If Parties, differing in matters of doctrine and discipline, refer the cause of difference, in a brotherly manner, to the General Synod, they shall institute a close and exact scrutiny and examination thereof, and give their opinion on the subject of difference, according to their best insight of right, equity, brotherly love and truth.

3. If difference between Synods be referred, the votes thereon shall be taken by Synods, and the referring Synods shall have no vote.

Sec. 6. The General Synod may devise plans for seminaries of education and missionary institutions, as well as for the aid of

poor ministers, and the widows and orphans of poor ministers, and endeavour, with the help of God, to carry them into effect.

Sec. 7. The General Synod may also institute and create a treasury for the effectual advancement of its purposes.

Sec. 8. The General Synod shall apply all their powers, their prayers and their means, toward the prevention of schisms among us, to be sedulously and incessantly regardful of the circumstances of the times, and of every casual rise and progress of unity of sentiment among Christians in general, in order that the blessed opportunities to promote concord and unity, and the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, may not pass by neglected and unavailing.

ARTICLE IV.

The General Synod shall choose, from among their own number, a President and a Secretary; and from among their own number, or elsewhere, as it may be necessary, a Treasurer. They shall continue in office until the next succeeding convention. The same person is at all times re-eligible as Secretary or Treasurer; but no one may be elected President more than two conventions in succession, and the same person cannot thereafter be elected for the two successively following conventions.

Sec. 1. The President shall act as chairman of the Convention. He may make motions, give his opinion and vote like every other member. With the consent and concurrence of the minister of the place where the convention is held, he shall appoint the several preachers during the convention. He shall subscribe all letters, written advices, resolutions, and the proceedings of the Synod. In extraordinary cases, and by request of any one of the acknowledged Synods, made known to him in the form of a Synodical or Ministerial resolution, he may call together special conventions of the General Synod. In case the business of the secretary become too burdensome for one person to execute, he shall, with the concurrence of the Secretary, appoint an assistant Secretary, and make known to him what portion of the labours he ought to undertake.

Sec. 2. The Secretary shall keep a journal of the proceedings, write, attest, and take care of all the documents and writings, make known the time and place of the convention, by the medium of the public prints, at least three months beforehand, and, in the special or extraordinary cases mentioned in the foregoing section, he shall give written notice thereof to each of the special Synods or Ministeriums.

Sec. 3. If the President or Secretary, in the intermediate time between the conventions, depart this life, resign his office, or become incapable of executing the same, the next in office shall take his place and perform his duties; if it be the Treasurer, then the President shall appoint another Treasurer *ad interim* in his stead.

Sec. 4. The Treasurer shall keep account of the receipts and expenditures of the Synod. He shall give receipts for all monies put into his hands. He shall not pay any money out of his hands but by order of the President, attested by the Secretary, in pursuance of a resolution of the Synod to that effect. At every convention of the Synod he shall render account.

ARTICLE V.

The course of business shall be conducted as follows: viz.

1. The deputies shall give personal notice of their arrival, to the minister of the place, or if the congregation be vacant of a minister, to any other person appointed by the congregation for the purpose, who shall make known to them their place of residence and the place where the sessions shall be held.

2. At nine o'clock in the forenoon of the first week-day of the time of convocation, the sessions shall begin and be opened with prayer.

3. The President elected by the former convention shall act as chairman till another President be chosen. In case of his absence, the persons present may, on motion made and seconded, appoint another in his stead.

4. The members shall give in to the chairman their attestations or certificates. For all the deputies from any one particu-

lar Synod one certificate signed by the President and attested by the Secretary of that Synod, shall be deemed sufficient, and all the members of the same Synod shall sit together.

5. If a majority of the deputies, of a majority of the Synods attached to the General Synod, be present, the business shall go on. If this proportion be lacking, the members present may from time to time postpone the sessions of the convention.

6. The President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected by ballot, on the first day of the sessions, and so soon as the members shall have given in their certificates.

7. The proceedings of the former convention shall be read by the Secretary.

8. Hereupon follow the several portions of business according to Article III, section for section.

9. Now other mixed motions may be made, concerning the subjects already discussed, or any other matters that may occur.

10. In conclusion, the General Synod shall appoint, by ballot, the time and place of the next convention, observing at all times, however, that one convention at least, be held every three years.

ARTICLE VI.

The General Synod may make whatever by-laws they may deem necessary, provided only, that the said by-laws do not contradict the spirit of the constitution.

ARTICLE VII.

No alterations of this constitution may be made except by the consent of two-thirds of the Synods attached to this convention; notice of the intended alteration having been given to the said Synods at least two years previous to the final adoption thereof.

Adopted October 24th, in the year of our Lord 1820.

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